Ex Libris
C. K. OGDEN

THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM BRIDGE, M.A.

FORMERLY FELLOW OF EMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN GREAT YARMOUTH, NORFOLK.

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THOMAS TEGG,

73, CHEAPSIDE.

1845.

CONTENTS OF VOL. IV.

SEVENTEEN SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS AND OCCASIONS.

Sermon 1. The True Soldier's Convoy: preached upon a Prayer Day for the Prince's good success in going forth to war. Numb. x. 35. .. 3

Sermon 2. Of Courage: to the Volunteers of the City of Norwich, and also to the Volunteers of Great Yarmouth. 2 Sam. x. 12. 33

Sermon 3. The Diseases that make a stoppage to England's Mercies discovered, and attended with their Remedies. John vii. 4. 50

Sermon 4. Some Comfortable Directions for such as have been, or may be driven from their houses, goods, or Country. Lam. v. 2. .. 74

Sermon 5. Thankfulness required in every Condition. 1 Thess. v. 18. 94

Sermon 6. The Woman of Canaan. Matt. xv. 21-28. 112

Sermon 7. A Vindication of Ordinances. Deut. xviii. 15. 130

Sermon 8. Grace and Love Beyond Gifts: preached before the Lord Mayor. 1 Cor. xii. 31. 162

Sermon 9. Of the Sin against the Holy Ghost: wherein is shewed, 1. What this sin against the Holy Ghost is; 2. How and in what respect this sin against the Holy Ghost, is above all other sins the Unpardonable Sin. Matt. xii. 31, 32. 187

Sermon 10. Of the Sin of Infirmity: wherein is shewed, besides other things, 1. That a man may possibly fall into the same sin again and again, yet be a true disciple; 2. That this sin may be but a sin of infirmity; 3. That being so, Christ will not leave him in it, but will come again, and not cast him off. Matt. xxvi. 43. 212

Sermon 11. The False Apostle Tried and Cast. Rev. ii. 2. 240

Sermon 12. The Good and Means of Establishment. 1 Pet. v. 10. 260

Sermon 13. Babylon's Downfall: preached before the honourable House of Commons. Rev. xiv. 8. 290

Sermon 14. On Zech. i. 18—21, ii. 1.: before the honourable House of Commons, at their Public Fast. 314

Sermon 15. The Saints' Hiding Place in the Time of God's Anger: before the right honourable the House of Lords, at their solemn Monthly Fast. Zeph. ii. 3. 346

Sermon 16. England Saved with a Notwithstanding: before the honourable House of Commons, on the Day of Thanksgiving for Deliverance from the Powder Plot. Ps. cvi. 8. .. 373

Sermon 17. Christ's Coming is at our Midnight: before the honourable House of Commons, on the Day appointed for Thanksgiving for the great Victory in Wales. Matt. xxv. 6. .. 405

EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE: IN TWO SERMONS ON MATT. III. 2.

Sermon 1. 427

Sermon 2. 447

SERMONS

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS AND OCCASIONS.

PREACHED A. D. 1640—65.

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

SERMON I.

THE TRUE SOLDIER'S CONVOY.

A Sermon preached May 16, 1640, upon a Prayer Day for the Prince's good success in going forth to war.

"*Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.*"—Psalm lxxxviii. 10.

PREFACE.

To the Reader.—Reader, out of desire to the good of God's people, and in respect of these troublesome times, it was thought not altogether unfit by some friends to print these few notes, in reading of which thou art desired not to expect much completeness of dependency or style, as not being ordered to the press by the Author himself, but by a very weak hand; whatsoever, therefore, thou shalt find herein profitable, that improve; if any thing otherwise, that cover by christian love, and the God of love be with thee. Amen.

"*Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered.*"
Numb. x. 35.

This chapter delivereth itself into four parts: in the first part the author speaketh of the silver trumpets, and of the matter and use of them; secondly, he sheweth the march of the children of Israel under their several standards; thirdly, he speaketh of a conference had between Moses and Hobab, verse 29; and, fourthly, you have Moses' prayer: "And they departed from the mount, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, &c. And it came to pass when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered." When they removed, still they prayed. When they set forth with their army they used those words, "Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered." When they returned with their army at the latter end of the year, or at any time, they said, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

You have here their going forth: "Arise, O Lord," &c.

this answer, *Sed pejus est quod amicos non habes,* But that is worse, that thou hast no friends. Though a man have many enemies, yet if he hath some faithful friends he may comfort himself thus: Though I have most bitter and vile enemies, yet I have as fast and sure friends. So that here is a further argument to shore up our unbelieving hearts: God himself hath many enemies.

But my enemies are such as do pretend friendship; and truly so are God's enemies such as do pretend love. I pray you tell me, I put it to your own hearts, who are those that do pretend more love to God than the breakers of the second commandment, that do make images; and wherefore do they so? Say they, We will have an image of Christ wheresoever we be come that we may always be put in mind of Christ. What a mighty pretence of love is here; and yet the breakers of the second commandment are said to be haters of God. It is not said so of the breakers of any of the other commandments that they are haters of God, but of those that break the second commandment; "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." So that though they pretend the most love, yet they are the most haters.

But for my enemies, the Lord knoweth I have done them no wrong, but good. I pray you hath not God done good unto his enemies? God hath many enemies, but what hurt hath God done them? Have you enemies? God hath so. Have you many enemies? God hath so. Have you many false enemies? God hath so. Remember this doctrine: God himself hath many enemies.

The second observation is: As the Lord hath many enemies so he is pleased for a time to sleep unto his enemies. He sleepeth; therefore it is said here, "Arise;" arising is opposed to sleeping. Lord, why sleepest thou? Psalm xliv. 23. But what is that? Not that we should understand it literally, for so the prophet derided Baal's priests: "Cry aloud, it may be your God sleepeth," 1 Kings xviii. 27; but understand it metaphorically: a man is said to be asleep when he is so intense about one business that he doth not regard another; that business which he doth not meddle with he is said to be asleep to: so, now, when God shall have many enemies, and they shall blaspheme his name, and revile his people, and hinder

his ordinances, and God shall be deaf to all their blasphemies, revilings, and all their wickedness; when they shall persist in evil, and bring their wicked devices to pass, and yet God shall be as it were blind to all their dealings; then God sleepeth to the enmity of his enemies. Would you know the reasons?

It may be the enemies are not yet great enough for God to contend with. The eagle doth not hunt after flies, and a lion doth not harness himself to battle against a poor worm. It may be the malice of the enemy is not yet great enough, and so is not a fit object for the great indignation of the great God, and therefore God suffereth them to go on that it might be a greater and a more full object to bear his indignation.

Again. Therefore God suffereth this, and seemeth to sleep for a time, because his people are not provoked enough against their enemies. As it was with the children of Israel that went against Benjamin, and fell before them twice, if Israel had overcome them the first time, they would not have been so provoked against them to have cut them all off as they were; but being beaten by them twice, thereby they were provoked to their destruction. So God suffereth his enemies to prevail, and sleepeth to the case of his people for a time, because the hearts of his people are not stirred enough against their enemies to cut them off fully; when that is done, then God awaketh.

Again, sometimes God sleepeth because his people sleep to him, and say, Arise, to something else. They sleep to him. It was the speech of an emperor when he was in prison, Oh, said he, when I was in my palace, I hoped so much in men, that I neglected trusting in God; but now I am in prison, I may hope less in men, and trust more in God. So it may be there is a time, when God's people do fall asleep to God; hope too much in men, and not enough in God. Now, saith the prophet, "Woe to him that saith to the stone, Arise," Hab. xi. 19. Shall God arise to his people, when they say to the stone, Arise? Shall God arise for his people, when they sit down and arise not up themselves? Brethren, faith is prayer in the coals, and prayer is faith in the flame; now it may be men's faith doth not burn out enough, it burneth dark; they pray, but are not hot in prayer; they live, but they do not live out of themselves in

God enough. Wherefore that God may awaken his people, he sleepeth himself.

Sometimes it is for this end; because the pit of his enemies is not yet digged. Consider that Psalm xciv. 12, 13, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked." There is a time when the pit of the wicked is digging, and all that time God's people may be in suffering. God suffereth the wicked to run away with the bait, and doth not yet draw them, because they are not full on the hook; but when they have swallowed the hook, then he will draw them.

Hence we may see what the reason is many times, why there is so much evil in the churches, and why the enemies prevail so much, so long. God is the strength of the churches, and our strength sleepeth sometimes upon all the afflictions of the churches. We are apt to be much discouraged, like the disciples, who whilst our Saviour was in the storm asleep, they came running in all haste to him, saying, "Carest thou not that we perish?" So it is many times when a storm ariseth upon the church, God seemeth to sleep, and we run in haste to God, and are apt to charge God, Lord, carest thou not that we perish? But, peace, peace, he sleepeth only, he will awake shortly, you shall see it, and they shall feel it. For,

The third point tells us, that though God seem to sleep, and his enemies prevail; yet there is a time when they shall be scattered, and when God ariseth they are scattered. There are two parts in this doctrine, I will handle them severally.

1. Though the enemies of the Lord do prevail, and God seemeth to sleep; yet there is a time when they shall be scattered. In that Psalm lxviii. 1, you have the same words that are here; "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered." In the following part of the Psalm, verse 12, it is said, "Kings of armies did flee apace." In the Hebrew it is: They fled, they fled; fled, is twice. Why so? That is, they did flee very hastily, and they fled most confusedly, they fled all ways; they fled, they fled, noting the greatness of the flight.

If it were not so, how should God be honoured in the world? God is resolved to recover his honour, his truth,

and his justice out of the hands of the world. Saith the Psalmist, "He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked: so that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth," Psalm lviii. 10. But did they not know it before, that God ruleth in the earth? True, but men will not say all that for God always which their hearts know, and the glut of prosperity often doth quench their knowledge; but when God's judgments are abroad, then men shall say, (he doth not say *godly* men, but then men shall say,) though they be but bare men, they shall say, &c. Oh, it is a sweet time when ungodly men shall own their own principles. And if you look into Psalm lxviii. 11, you shall find when the enemies of the church are destroyed, that God hath many preachers made that do teach his praises. Saith the psalmist, verse 12, "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of those that published it: kings of armies did flee apace, and she that tarried at home divided the spoil." The words in the original are very significant, and do note two things. First, the word which you read company, in the Hebrew it is, army: "great was the army" of preachers. An army of preachers is a great matter; nay, it is a great matter to have seven or eight good preachers in a great army; but to have a whole army of preachers, that is glorious. Secondly, it doth note out the heartiness of this preaching army; for the word *nephesh*, soul, is to be understood as in that place of Ecclesiastes; it is said there, "The words or book of the preacher," which being in the feminine gender, doth suppose *nephesh*, and as if he should say, as Vatablus hath it: The words or book of him that hath a preaching soul or heart, or the words of a preaching soul or heart. So here, where it is said, great is the army of preachers; the word being in the feminine gender, it is as if he should say, great is the army of preaching souls, whose very hearts within them shall preach of the Lord's works. Now, my brethren, it is much to have a preaching army; but if this army shall with heart and soul preach of God's praise, oh, that is a blessed thing. Yet thus shall it be, when the enemies of God shall be destroyed. And therefore, seeing God will not lose all those sermons of his own praises, in due time the enemies of the church shall be scattered.

Again, all the plots and projects of God's enemies lie

under a curse. Now the curse scattereth, and the blessing gathereth. When God blessed, then the people were gathered; when God curseth, then they are scattered. You know when Jacob was to bless his children, instead of blessing Levi, he seemeth to pronounce a curse upon them, that they should be scattered in Israel. Gen. xlix. 7. Surely it is a part of the curse to be scattered, and the enemies of God and his people are always under the curse; and, as a learned, holy divine of your own hath it, They are never prayed for. But look, as it is with some grass that groweth on the house-top, though it be higher than that which grows in the field, yet no man prays for it, and no man saith, The Lord bless it. But the grass and corn that grows in the field, the men that come by, say, There is a good crop of corn, the Lord bless it. So, though wicked men and the enemies of the church, do perk up higher than the rest, yet they are never under prayer, but always under the curse, and therefore no wonder though they be scattered.

God will lay men's ways upon their own heads: the fish shall be boiled in the water it lived in, and men destroyed by the same way they walked in. Therefore in Psalm lix., you shall see how sin is answered with the like punishment. The psalmist speaking concerning his enemies, ver. 6, 7, "They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Behold they belch out with their mouth, swords are in their lips." That is, they revile, they jeer and scorn at the godly: there is their sin. Now look into the latter end of the Psalm, at ver. 14, you shall see their answerable punishment: "And at evening they shall return, and make a noise like a dog, and go about the city; let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied." As they went about the city, barking and making a noise like dogs, so shall they go about the city howling like dogs: thus God will answer men in their own kind. Was not Adonibezek punished in his own kind, Judg. i. 7; Egypt in its own kind; and the Jews of old in their own kind? This is God's method still; and therefore if you compare Rev. viii. and ix. with Rev. xvi., you shall see that the trumpets and the vials are alike, and some take them to be all one; but the trumpets note out the time when the sins are committed, and the vials the time when the punishments are inflicted. But the evils

mentioned in both are much alike, because God proportioneth men's punishment to their own sins. Now the enemies of the church have scattered themselves up and down to do mischief. How are the Jesuits and the locusts of our time, scattered up and down in all places! They have scattered God's people, and they scatter their own sins wheresoever they be come. Therefore there must come a scattering time for themselves also, for that is equal.

You will say, Do we not see the contrary? Our eyes are witnesses of the contrary. We see the people of God are scattered, but we do not see the enemies are scattered.

It is true God's people are scattered, and truly it is the remainder of the curse upon them, for which we are to be humbled. Though God provides a place for us in the world, yet certainly it is some part of the curse, to have our names changed from Israel to Jezreel. This is God's way, that what evil he doth afterward bring upon his enemies, he doth many times first bring it upon his own friends, by his and their enemies. He first sleepeth to them, then he awaketh for them. But to answer: God's people are often scattered; but though they be scattered, yet there is much difference between their and the world's scattering. The scattering of God's children is turned into a blessing to them; the scattering of his enemies is a curse, and so it endeth. A plain instance for it you have in Levi: saith Jacob, "Let them be divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel," Gen. xxix. 7. yet that proved a great blessing, for the tribe of Levi being scattered among all the tribes, by that means all the tribes had preachers. So now it is in the scattering of the saints, though they be scattered into divers places, yet they are made thereby a blessing to many countries; hereby they carry truths into other places; hereby they are cleansed from their own filthiness; hereby they learn to walk more humbly; hereby they learn to die daily to the world and outward comforts; hereby they are weaned from their friends and all natural engagements; hereby they are made more conformable to Jesus Christ, who was a stranger upon earth; hereby they meet with many experiences; hereby they see many promises fulfilled; hereby they enjoy the ordinances of God in a purer manner than before; so that all their scatterings are blessings to them.

Though the people of God be scattered, yet they are gathered

again, for "great shall be the day of Jezreel," Hosea i. 11. Yet more fully, Jer. xxiii. 2, 3, 4: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, against the pastors that feed my people: Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doing, saith the Lord, and I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds, and they shall be fruitful and increase, and I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord." Yea, they are therefore scattered, that they may be better gathered. Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 17; "Thus saith the Lord God, behold I, even I will both search my sheep and seek them out, as a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered. Thus saith the Lord God, behold I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats." Before their scattering the goats were mingled with the flock; upon their gathering, the goats were separated. A good garment may be ripped into pieces that it may be better sewed. Good is that speech of Augustine: He that killeth, considereth not how he slasheth and rendeth; but he that cutteth to cure, considereth how he cutteth.* Or thus, suppose a man be to cut two men, the one to cure him, the other to kill him; that man which he cutteth to cure, he considereth how he cutteth him, but he taketh no care how he slasheth him whom he intendeth to kill. So doth God deal in the cuttings and scatterings of his own children and the vile world. Or thus: an army you know may be scattered two ways; the soldiers when they come from their trenches, every one goeth to his hut, and the whole army is in some measure scattered and divided, but in order; this is an orderly scattering: but when they are routed, that is another scattering, wherein there is no order. God's people are scattered as those that go to their huts, but the wicked are scattered otherwise, their scattering is a full routing, that is never gathered. This is the punishment of the enemies of the church, they shall be scattered.

If so, hence we may see what a lamentable thing it is to

* Qui trucidat non considerat quo modo laniat, qui curat considerat quo modo sicat.

be an enemy of God. This is the portion of all the enemies of God. they shall be scattered. Lamentable is their condition, therefore, that are God's enemies. Brethren, God is the best friend and the worst enemy. If God be my friend, what though I have many enemies! Affliction shall be all rated off in due time, as the dog is when he falleth upon a friend. If the dog fall upon a thief or an enemy, we let him alone, he hath leave to worry him. When afflictions seize upon God's people, in due time they are chidden off; but when they fall upon God's enemies, they shall not be rated off, they may worry them, and the venom of their teeth shall abide in them to all eternity. The text saith, "As for those mine enemies," &c. It is some grief to be slain before justice, but before mercy itself, that is more grievous. It is some grief to be slain before those that cannot help, but to have help stand by and not help, that is most bitter. Such is Christ, he is our help, he is our merciful High Priest, and yet he saith, "As for those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me," Luke xix. 27. Oh, what a sad thing it is to be God's enemy.

But who are those enemies?

You will all say thus, that if a man seeth the picture of another, and as soon as he seeth it he falleth a tearing of it; and the more like the picture is to the man, the more he teareth it; surely this man was an enemy to him whom the picture is like unto. So when men shall fall a tearing of God's people, and therefore because they are godly, are not they enemies to God?

Consider Psalm lxviii. 21, there is a plain place to shew you who are God's enemies. Saith the psalmist, "But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses." Such as go on still in their trespasses are God's enemies. There is no child of God but may and doth fall into sin; he may fail in his speech and in his practice; but it is the character of the world to "lie in wickedness," 1 John v. 19. And therefore, know you such an one as hath been a drunkard, and a drunkard still; a swearer eight, nine, or ten years ago, and a swearer still; a sabbath-breaker, a liar, an adulterer, a great while ago, and so still, that man is an enemy, and in due

time the Lord will wound the hairy scalp of such a ruffian, for he is an enemy.

When a man cannot endure to hear of the welfare and good success of the churches, and of the ordinances of God, that is a sign they are God's enemies. A man loveth to hear good of him that he loveth. If a man love God, he loveth to hear good of God and all that belongeth to him; of the churches, and of all the ordinances: but when men hear of good news of the churches, and of the ordinances, and do secretly grudge, repine, and wish it otherwise, these are now secret enemies, and will be open.

The scripture phrase telleth us who are God's enemies. Saith the psalmist, "Lord, make plain thy way before my face, because of mine enemies," Ps. v. 8. In the Hebrew it is, "Lord, make plain thy way before me, because of my observers." Malicious observation is a sign of enmity; and therefore when men shall diligently observe and lay wait for the haltings of God's people, and are glad to find any thing to raise a scandal; more rejoicing at the scandal, than grieving for the sin; those, as beasts which seek for the excrements of men to nuzzle in them, are God's enemies, and God is their's.*

Those that hinder the great proceedings that God hath in the world, are his enemies. In the restoration and rebuilding of the temple, God had many enemies: Tobiah, Sanballat, and many others. Neh. vi. 1. How did it appear? They did out of malice labour to make the work of God to cease. So when men in their generations and times shall maliciously labour to cause the works of God to cease, and hinder the great proceedings which God hath on foot in the world; these are enemies and none but enemies. Now God is and hath been working of many great works in the world; if any man's heart tell him that he hath thus taken up arms against God, let him lay down his weapons and humble himself, for God will be above him; God is greater and will break him.

The second part of the doctrine followeth: that these enemies when God ariseth are scattered: God's arising is the cause of their scattering.

When God ariseth, then all his host ariseth. When a man ariseth, then all his clothes arise; when the subject

* Qui tanquam famelici porci immergunt se, in stercora sanctorum et ex jis delicias faciunt.—Luther in Gen. ix.

ariseth, all the accidents arise; when the prince in the field ariseth, all his soldiers arise: when God ariseth, then all his followers arise; and when they arise, the enemies fly, and so are scattered.

Consider but the nature of his enemies as they are described in Scripture. They are compared to wax before the fire. Ps. lxviii. 2. Though wax may lie awhile there and not melt, whilst the fire is not blown up; yet when the fire flameth, the wax melteth. They are compared to the waves of the sea, Jude xiii.; that roar whilst they are in the sea, yet when they come to the shore they break. They are compared to smoke, Psalm lxviii. 2; which though it rise like a dark cloud, yet is soon scattered and consumed by the puff of the wind. They are compared to vapours, mists and clouds, Hos. xii. 3; which though they may seem to threaten the earth with some great storm, yet when the sun ariseth in its full heat then are they scattered. Such wax, such waves, such smoke, such vapours and mists are the Lord's enemies; soon therefore scattered when he ariseth.

But though it may be easy, in regard of God's power, to scatter the enemies of the churches; yet when we look upon the condition of the churches as they are in themselves, their deliverance is very difficult. It is an unlikely thing that the distressed churches should be delivered, as the matter now standeth with them; when were the enemies of the church more prevailing than now they are?

So it must be. What is more unlikely than that a dead man, who lieth upon the grave's mouth, should be raised up to life, and to such life as to ascend and go up to heaven. Yet such is the deliverance of the church when it cometh. Rev. xi. 12. It was a very unlikely thing that Judah should ever come out of Babylon; the Jews did despair of it: and therefore as a man that thinketh he shall never return the way that he goeth, taketh no heed to his way, observeth not by what turnings, windings and marks he cometh, so were they in their journey and way to Babylon; wherefore saith Jeremiah, xxxi. 21, 22, "Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart towards the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn thee again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these cities, &c., for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth; a woman shall compass a strong man." As if he should say thus: You think yourselves in a very

weak and low condition, the enemy strong, and you in their hands; well, but the time shall come that a woman shall lay siege to a strong man: *Fœmina virum fortem angustiabit*, Psalm i. 18; for that word read, to *compass*, in the Hebrew signifieth also, to compass by way of siege; and that word read, *man*, in your translation, signifieth a strong man: and the sense of all is, that those which are as weak as women shall beset, encompass, and beleaguer those that are strong and valiant men. But we see no likelihood, might they say, of this. No, it may be so, but saith God, "I will do a new thing." But there is no means. It mattereth not, "I will create a new thing:" I, that drew once the world out of nothing, will draw the deliverance of the churches also out of nothing: I will be a creating God to the churches though they be never so low. Was it not an unlikely thing for Peter to be delivered that very night when he was to die the next day. Acts xii. 5, 6. He was in close prison, he was fast in chains, he was there kept with soldiers, he had rough keepers to keep the prison doors, he had to go through the first and second watch, and he was to pass the iron gate that leadeth into the city; yet prayer conveyed him through all these parties of opposition. The church prayeth and Peter cometh, but what is this to us? We may not expect miracles now. Yes, we, even we are commanded "to commit our souls into the hands God in well doing as unto a faithful Creator," 1 Peter iv. 19. Not as unto a Redeemer only, but of a Creator, who hath promised his creating strength to supply us in our distresses, and therefore saith, "into theh ands of a faithful Creator." Well, then, though the afflictions of the churches be never so great, let us not mourn as those that are without hope, for God can do it with ease and much facility. He is our Creator, he will do it in truth and in much faithfulness, for he is our faithful Creator, into whose hands we are to commit ourselves and the condition of all the churches.

Again, When God ariseth, then God appeareth. Now the enemies of God cannot endure the sight of God. When John the beloved disciple of Christ, who had the honour to be trusted with the book of the Revelation, saw but one angel, Rev. xxii. 8, he fell down and trembled. John was a good man, he had not a guilty conscience; yet when an angel did but appear John falleth down. How shall men tremble when the great God shall appear, and they shall appear before

him in all their guiltiness! Surely they will tremble and fear then, and that their fear will end in scattering.

Beloved, we may see what an easy thing it is for God to scatter the enemies of the church, though the afflictions of the church be never so great, and the condition of the saints be never so mean. Is it not an easy thing for a strong man to rise when he is free and healthy; is it not an easy thing for fire to dissolve the wax; is it not an easy thing for a lion to tear the caul of a man's heart? What is more strong than a lion; what more thin than the caul of a man's heart? and God hath said it: "I will rend the caul of their heart; and there will I devour them like a lion," Hos. xiii. 8. Was it not an easy thing for Samson in all his strength to break those cords and withs wherewith he was tied? Judges xvi. 9. Jesus Christ is our spiritual Samson, and though his body, the church, be bound with the withs and cords of the Philistines, yet he can easily arise, crack and break them in pieces, though they be never so strong. Is it not an easy thing for a man to open his hand? God openeth his hand and we are satisfied. Is it not an easy thing for a man to set his face against another? God only setteth his face against his enemies and they are scattered. Oh, with what infinite facility can God help the church! If his servants had no credit with him, or if he could not help them but with much difficulty, there were room for our discouragements; but it is not so, he speaketh the word only, hisseth, stampeth, riseth, and we are helped.

Hence see what a necessity there is that we should ponder and observe the works of God and the judgments of the Lord. In these great volumes we may read much of God. When God ariseth, then God is to be seen, and seen especially; when God's enemies are scattered, then he ariseth. Now there are three sorts of people that are to blame here, as concerning the observation of the Lord's works and his great judgments: the first are those that the prophet complains of: "When the hand of the Lord is lifted up on high they will not behold his majesty," Isa. xxvi. 11. Another are those that the psalmist strikes at in Psalm ii. 10, 12: "Be wise, therefore, O ye kings,: kiss the Son lest he be angry and ye perish in the way:" who seeing and observing God fetching his stroke at a land or people, will not stand out of God's way and reach. The third sort are those that degrade

the works of God, and nickname them, saying they are none of God's works, but works of Satan: like the Jews and pharisees, who, when Lazarus was raised from the grave by a miracle, would have killed Lazarus out of spite to Christ; so these men, when God hath wrought gloriously for the conversion of a poor sinner, or the destruction of his vile enemies, do what they can to put God's work to death, calling that hypocrisy which is God's grace, that obstinacy which is good conscience, and that chance which is God's glory. But let all these consider that one place in Psalm xxviii. 5, "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up." There is more in it than we are aware of: who doth not study to be built up? Wherefore do many men of knowledge and learning study and take so much pains, wearing out their flesh, but that they may be built up in name and credit. Wherefore do you trade up and down the world, but that you may be built up in your estate; and what is that which men fear more than destruction? Destruction is final ruin. Now, my brethren, if the great works of the Lord be done before you, and you do not observe them, you cannot be built up; and if you will not attend the operation of the Lord's hands, you shall be destroyed. God's judgments will take hold on those that will not give heed to his judgments; a man may be destroyed for not observing another's destruction. It is a fearful judgment to have no judgment, and he hath no judgment that doth not mind the Lord's judgment. It is made the character of the saints in the latter times of the world, that they are able to sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are ways, thou King of saints: who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest," Rev. xv. 3, 4.

But suppose evil befal other men, it may be that it falleth out by common providence; how shall I say that God is risen, and to be seen, and seen specially in a judgment, and when may a judgment be said to come in the way of a judgment?

When wicked men are snared in the works of their own

hands, then God is seen and seen apparently: "The Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah," Psalm ix. 16. There is not such a clause again in all the whole scripture that I remember. You have Selah in many places, but you have not those two words, Higgaion, Selah, in any other place. The word Higgaion, cometh from the Hebrew word, Hagar, that signifieth, to meditate; and Higgaion is *meditandum aliquid*, a thing worth our meditation; or, as much as if he should say, This is a matter of special meditation, that God is to be known by the judgment that he executeth, when the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. When, therefore, wicked men begin a work against the people of God, and it wheeleth about upon their own heads, insomuch as they are taken and snared in their own practices, then God is seen specially, and known by the judgment that he executeth. Higgaion. Selah.

God is specially to be seen when the judgment lieth beyond the reach of second causes, and is greater than the stock of the second cause can bear. Samson's strength was a judgment to the Philistines. How was God to be seen in that? Yes, for Samson was the strongest man that ever was, yet his mother, when she was breeding him, was "to drink no wine or strong drink, nor to eat any unclean thing," Judges xiii. 5, which also did include strong meat. God would not have Samson's strength imputed to the strength of second causes; out of the weak came strong; the second cause was not able to bear so strong effect. This strength was their judgment, their vexation, their scourge; and this their judgment lay beyond the reach of the second cause, therefore was God seen herein apparently; where there is any thing of God's creating power, there is God plainly to be seen; now where the effect lieth beyond the bounds of the second cause, God's creating power is seen for to raise that, and therefore if in any evils which befal the children of men, the strength of the second cause cannot reach them, there you may say, Oh, my soul, here is God's judgment, God's plague, God's hand; here is God seen, and seen specially: here God is risen.

When God's judgments for men's sins do so find them out as they are their own blabs, their own accusers, their own condemners, and sometimes their own executioners, then

God is to be seen, and seen especially: so with Judas and many others. It is written of Julian the Apostate, who raised an army against the Persians; in the fight he was stricken, whether with an arrow or otherwise I say not, but being sorely wounded, he took a handful of his own blood, and flung it into the air, saying, *Vicisti Galilei!* Thou hast overcome me, O Galilean. You have many stories to this purpose in the Book of Martyrs, recorded by Master Fox, I will name but that one of that vile wretch who dealt so injuriously with the martyr James Abbes, who, after all his base usage of that good man, was taken with a strange kind of frenzy, and cried out, James Abbes is saved and I am damned; James Abbes is saved and I am damned; and so died. Others were not privy to all his injuries, but his own guilt made him his own blab; so, now, when a man's sin cometh and arresteth him, and his heart and conscience is upon the rack continually, he bursting out into hideous outcries, being his own accuser, his own condemner, or his own executioner, there God is seen, and seen apparently.

When the work of the Lord is carried with such a strong hand as cannot be resisted, there God is seen: "I will work and who shall let," saith God. Isaiah xliii. 13.

A judgment cometh in way of a judgment when it maketh way to a further judgment: as when God giveth in mercy, he giveth that he may give; so when he smiteth in judgment, he smiteth that he may smite: he maketh way to his anger when he is angry indeed: and when you see this, then say, Here is God seen, and seen especially; now God is risen; blessed are all they that trust in him.

But how shall we raise God that he may be seen in the world for the good of the churches?

The next point telleth us: viz. Our prayers do excite, raise and stir up God to the scattering and destruction of our enemies. I will not spend much time in the proof of this; you all know the parable of the unjust judge, and you all know the promise of the just God to hear prayer. Brethren, is God able to scatter his enemies; is God mighty; is God all-sufficient; hath God power enough to do it? God is pleased to make over his power, his wisdom, his mercy to our prayers: who doth not know what credit prayer hath in heaven and what strength in earth? The truth is, prayer may do any thing that

is reasonable with God; and if you ask prayer by what authority it doth all, it will shew you its commission in that place, 2 Chron. vii. 1, 2, compared with 2 Chron. vi., where God wrought a miracle to shew that he would answer prayer.

But you will say, Can any prayer do this: excite, stir up and awaken God?

No, but it must be a crying prayer. If violence be offered to a man in his house, and he doth not cry for help, help cometh not in presently; but if there be thieves in the house, and he putteth his head out at a window and doth cry, Murder, murder! men will break up the doors and come in presently.

Besides, they must be self-awakening prayers: that prayer will never waken God that doth not waken yourselves, and that prayer will never stir and raise God that doth not stir and raise your own soul.

It must be a self-denying prayer. You know the case between Moses and Israel: Israel had provoked God, God says to Moses, Exod. xxxii. 10, 14, that he "would consume Israel, and raise up him to be a great people." Moses lays by all that, and he goes to God in prayer; and what arguments doth he use? His prayer was but short, and all the arguments were fetched from God and the covenant: "Remember thy covenant with Abraham," &c; and, "Thou art a merciful God, slow to anger," &c. Not a word of himself; it was a self-denying prayer, and was heard presently. In prayer those arguments take most with God that are from God.

Besides, it must be a continued prayer, as Col. iv. 2. Prayers are the saints' factors and negociate for them in heaven, therefore they must lie by it.

Again, It must be when the man abideth in Christ and Christ in him: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you," John xv. 7. He doth not say, If you abide in a tavern, or in an alehouse, or in such a vile course; but, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, then ye shall ask."

Reforming prayers are most prevailing. *Virtutes sunt orationis fundamenta;* there is no energy in those prayers that are not strengthened with reformation; either your prayers will eat up your sins, or else your sins will make a hand of your prayers. Isa. lviii. 6, "Loose the bands of wickedness, &c.,

then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer, thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here am I, if thou," &c. Though the lesson be never so good, yet if the instrument be out of tune there is no harmony, and harmonious prayer is very speeding, therefore,

It must be joint prayer. When the church prayed, Peter was delivered. It is true that their prayer was very urgent in itself, for, according to the original, it is, they continued in outstretched prayer: it was holding prayer, for they continued; it was seasonable, for it was the night before his appointed death: yet withal the church prayeth and Peter cometh. One string doth not make the harmony, and the word is, " If two or three of you shall make a symphony, it shall be done for you," Matt. xviii. 19. God who is overcome by none suffers himself to be overcome by prayer;* but your prayer must be full of himself, pressing and a close leaguer; wherefore you that lie perdue, keep centinel, or to speak in scripture phrase, Isa. lxii. 6, 7, all you that are watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem, all the day and all the night continually cease not: ye that are mindful of the Lord keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he repair, and until he set up Jerusalem the praise of the Lord.

Will prayer do it? Will prayer raise God for the scattering of the enemies of the churches? I beseech you, in the name of God, let us consider where to lay the fault and the blame of much of that evil which is come upon the churches in these latter times. When the defeat was lately before Antwerp, there was fault laid on such a man, and such a man. When we consider the afflictions of Germany, we are ready to say, If such a king or country had stepped in, all this evil had been prevented, the Palatinate restored and peace settled; but may we not rather say, If our prayers had stepped in. This word telleth us that our prayers do awaken God, and when God is awakened, then the enemies are destroyed; we see then, in truth, where the fault lieth, our prayers have not come in full enough; wherefore the less we have prayed before, the more let us pray now; pray in your closets, pray in your families, pray in the assemblies, pray alone, pray in company, pray for all the churches, pray for Germany the first place of reformation, pray for Holland your hiding-place,

* Deus qui nullis contra se superari potest precibus superatur.—Hierom.

and in all your prayers forget not England, still pray for England. Take some motives:

You are unnatural if you pray not. It is reported of Crœsus's son, that he was dumb, and seeing one about to kill his father, though he had been always dumb before, yet then he burst forth into this speech, What, will you kill Crœsus? If you be in Christ, the church of Christ is more to you than many Crœsuses; your grace doth not extinguish nature, but advance it; help, and not hinder. A gracious heart cannot be unnatural though it loveth to be supernatural.

Again, It is the property of a good christian, and of true grace, to observe what work God is doing, and to help on that work: what God is doing in the world, and to help that on; what God is doing upon his own heart, and to help that on. O Lord, saith the soul, help me! I will help thee, I will put my shoulder unto thy work as thou art pleased to put thy hand to my duty. Now the great work which God is doing in these times is the pouring out of the seven vials, Rev. xvi.; and if you look into Rev. v. 8, you shall find that the saints' prayers are their vials: help forward, then, God's vials with your vial; vial doth call for vial.

Either good and deliverance will come unto the churches, or else it will not. If it do not, you had need pray that your hearts may be supported in all and settled. Prayer is a composing duty, and fully settling. If it do come, you had need pray that you may have the comfort of it when it cometh, or else that you may not envy at those that have prayed, for it is a hard thing for one that standeth idle not to envy at him that worketh.

You do not love the churches if you do not pray for them: "He that loveth Jerusalem, prayeth for the peace of Jerusalem." Do you love England; do you love Germany; do you love Holland; do you love the churches, and your friends? He that loveth Jerusalem prayeth for it, and if you do not pray for them, you have no love to them.

You cannot prosper if you do not pray; "They shall prosper that love thee." How love thee? In praying for thee. You cannot prosper if you pray not for the churches: will you not pray then?

Again, You are not God's servants, if you do not pray for his servants; you are not God's children, if you pray not for

his children; if you mark that of the psalmist, it is made an act of service, and a sign of a servant, to "pity the dust and stones of fallen Jerusalem." Saith he, "thy servants pity the dust thereof;" as if they were not servants that have no pity. I know you would not have your livery taken from you. All things of the like nature sympathize with one another; if you have the same nature with the saints, you shall, you will, you must sympathize with them in all conditions; you cannot but pray.

You cannot have a part in the prayers of the churches, unless you pray for the churches. Think upon this argument. Can you be contented to lose your share in all the prayers of the saints? An action there, is better than an action in the East India Company; their stock is great, if your stock go not in, you cannot have a part with them, and that is evil.

If you pray not for the churches, your own selfish prayers will be bootless. When a man shall pray much for his own family, his own name or estate, his own child that lieth a dying, and will not pray for the dying churches; this is a selfish duty. A carnal, selfish spirit, is very loathsome in what is spiritual; and what are you the better for your rich cabin, your warm cabin, your neat cabin, if your ship sink.

Consult with Neh. xiii. 1, 2; there you find it written, that "the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever." What was the reason? "Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water." He that will not meet with distressed Israel with such relief as he may, is an unfit man to have a name in a church of Christ, and it is unfit he should come into the house of God for ever. Wherefore as ever you desire to have a name in God's house, pray, pray, oh now pray; you may with this bread and water meet with Israel, meeting with them you do meet with Christ.

The price of the welfare, peace, and good of the churches is now rising; the time may come it may not be purchased or bought in by prayer.* I remember I have read of a man that brought the book of the sybils unto the emperor or king of the Romans, and desired a great price for those books.

* Fugientia sequimur.

The emperor refused. He goeth away, burneth half the books, doubled the price, and then cometh to the emperor, and offered him them at that rate. The emperor refuseth again. He went away, and burnt the half of those books which were left, and doubled the price: which the emperor considering, gave him the whole money which he desired. So now, it may be, you may have the welfare, the peace, the life of the churches for prayer; time may come, wherein though you add to your prayer your estates, to your estates your liberties, to your liberties all your welfares, and to your welfares your lives, yet you may go without it. Now, it may be had at this good rate, will you not take this good commodity whilst it is offered to you?

It may be the business of the churches stayeth upon your prayer. If that midwife would come away, the woman would be delivered. Rev. vii. Four angels were sent out to punish the world; and after that a fifth angel is commissioned to go bid them hold their hand, until the servants of the living God are sealed in their foreheads. Angels' work must stay until they be sealed, saith Hezekiah. Isa. xxxvii. 3: "This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy, for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." So say I, brethren, it may be the Lord your God will hear the words of all Rabshakahs, whom the enemies of the church have employed to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words, which the Lord your God hath heard: wherefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that are left. God said to Moses, "Let me alone;" but to you otherwise, Why do you let me alone? I stay for you, if you pray earnestly I will come quickly.

I put you but this disjunction; either, O Jacob, thou hast thy brother Esau to meet withal, or else thou hast not: if not, what meaneth thy fears? if thou art to meet with rough Esau, then remember what one night's sweating in prayer did, how it first obtained the face of God, then of Esau. Gen. xxxii. 24; xxxiii. 10; Isa. liv. 26, 17; lviii. 14. The promise is made to you. Every promise is a new footstep for prayer, wherefore you that ever prayed, pray now; nay, you that never prayed, pray now; now is a praying time, and it is good pulling whilst God is coming, begging whilst God is giving. And hath God dealt out nothing to the churches

in these last times? Do but observe which way the wheel turneth in these latter days.

But why do you exhort us to pray? We are here purposely, and come to pray.

True, we are so, but we must pray at other times too. We are here this day to pray, that we may pray hereafter, that we may set wheels of prayer on going; prayer doth fit for prayer; but yet pray for the present. And so we are come to note:

Fifthly, When the people of the land go forth to war, the people of the Lord should go forth to prayer. When the ark removed, then said Moses, "Arise, O Lord," &c. Our prayers are to lead armies into the field. 1 Josh. xvii., see how the people led forth Joshua: "According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses." You know the prayer of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and other worthies, to this purpose. Reasons of it, are these especially:

Every business is to be led forth by prayer. Prayer is a leading duty to all our duties; and the greater any business is, the more prayer is to be made. The business of war is a great business, almost miraculous. When I see an army, methinks I see a company of walking towns. It is a great matter, and will you not have so great a business led on by prayer.

But if a man have a business to do, which requireth haste, by attending to prayer he may lose his business.

For that purpose, consider but that one place in answer to this, Josh. v. 2. In the foregoing chapter the children of Israel went through Jordan, and came into their enemies' country; and in this verse the Lord said unto Joshua, "Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time," Josh. v. 2. Now upon their circumcision they were sore: verse 8, it is said, "They abode in their places in the camp till they were whole." Now being come through Jordan, and lying before Jericho, among all their enemies, the natives could not but hear that they were circumcised, and how sore they were; insomuch as the children of Israel might have objected and said, Oh, Lord, if we be circumcised, we shall hinder our designs, weaken our-

selves, advantage our enemies, that they may fall upon us in our trenches. But as the Lord commanded, so did they, they were circumcised; neither did this act of religion hinder their business. And therefore let none say, If I stay upon prayer my business will take despair; no, no, precedent prayer will make it prosper: trust God and you will find it.

Solomon saith, "All things are beautiful in their season: there is a time for all things," Eccl. iii. 1, 11. Therefore a time for prayer; and though we are to pray continually, yet there is some time wherein we are especially to draw near to God. Saith the psalmist, Ps. xxxii. 6, "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time that thou mayest be found." Grace maketh one pray; the wisdom of grace maketh one know the occasion, season, and time of prayer.

Fearing times are times of prayer. Saith the psalmist, "At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee;" and true faith soon worketh itself into prayer.

Tropical uncertain times are times of prayer. "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, if so be that ye may be hid in the day of the Lord's wrath," &c. Zeph. ii. 3. When the world laboureth under uncertainty, then should the saints labour in prayer. Again, the morning time is a time of prayer: "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning; O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee," Ps. v. 3. There is a morning of every year, as well as a morning of every day; there is a morning to every business, as well as a morning to every day: now is the year's morning, now is the morning of our great business; wherefore now up in the morning of this great work, let us direct our prayers to the Lord, and look up. Pray now, my brethren, for now it is seasonable.

As the promise is the only hold that we have on God, so prayer is the only odds that we have of our enemy. Beloved, the enemies have most commonly the outward advantage of God's people; look upon both, and you shall find that outwardly they have much odds, either more men, more money, or more munition: what shall weigh down this odds but prayer? Many times prayer doth more than the whole army. Consider Ps. lxxvi. 3; "There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle." Where?

In Salem, in Sion, ver. 2. He doth not say in the field. The arrows are first broken in the assemblies by the saints' prayers, after that in the field by the Lord's soldiers. It is said of Archimedes, being a mathematician, that he did more by drawing his lines, than any soldier did by his valour. So God's people may do more by the lines they draw, and the prayers they make, than others can do any other way. Prayers are the saints' scaling ladders, wherewith they leap over walls, and their strength whereby they break through hosts. You know usually there is much disorder in armies; the soldiers have much evil and sin among them; though the soldiers be outwardly strong, yet many of them are inwardly weak, and prayer cometh in to gather up the weak forces. Numb. xii. 15, you may see how that for the sin of one woman, the whole host of Israel was stayed, and could not march on. Her sin hindered their march; she was but one, and a woman. It may seem therefore strange, that the whole body of the army should stay upon her; yet so it was, and they could not remove until prayer came in: ver. 13, "Moses cried to the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee." Then she was healed, and the people journeyed. Thus prayer ordereth the ranks, fetcheth up the weak forces, leadeth on the army upon the enemy, and cometh in the rear. Without prayer then there is no footing. We are not fit to strike until our armies be in joint, and prayer jointeth us; we are not fit to be exalted until we be humbled, and prayer humbleth us; and if it be so, then by way of use:

You may see what work we have to do this day, we are to lead forth this well-formed army, as you heard in the mandate sent unto us by the States, of a well-formed leaguer, under the command of that noble and worthy general, the Prince of Orange; and methinks he doth, as it were, put prayer in office, and saith, I will not be commander, prayer shall; I will be only lieutenant unto prayer; let prayer go first, let prayer strike the first stroke. Methinks I hear a dialogue and conference between him and the country. We desire you, Sir, to take the care of this great army; we commit it to your wisdom; go and prosper. But, saith he, I dare not go until prayer go; I am under prayer; give me prayer first, and then I will go: first smite with your prayers, and then we will smite with our weapons. Smiting prayers

are now expected; and though there are divers motives which I have used, to stir up your hearts to pray for the churches in general; yet take three or four more, which may have some special relation unto this people, and you amongst them.

The enemies which you pray against, are the most wicked enemies that God hath. Of all enemies, those are most wicked that are most crafty; the artificial sinner is the worst sinner, as the naturalized grace is the most gracious; such are the antichristian enemies of the church: for as, (Gregory observeth it,*) Jesus Christ did choose simple, poor men, to preach the truth; so antichrist chooseth those which are crafty, subtle, to disperse errors. Of all enemies those are most vile which are most cruel; and those are most cruel unto the churches, that have once made profession of the truth and proved apostates. The Scripture pointeth at three especially in this particular, the devil, the Jews, and antichrist. The devil is cruel unto mankind, he is the grand apostate; the Jew is cruel unto all christians, he is a vile apostate; antichrist is cruel to all the present churches, and he is a great apostate, yet not only an apostate, but apostacy in the abstract, 2 Thess. ii. 3, and therefore cruelty itself. In the book of the Revelation, Rome and the antichristian party is called Sodom, it is called Egypt, and it is called Babylon. You know the unkindness of Egypt, the cruelty of Babylon, and the villainy of Sodom unto God's people. Why should Rome and the antichristian party stand under all these names, but because they are guilty of all their evils. And the worse they are, the more hold you have on them to pray against them. Arius was a vile enemy to the churches, and very cruel; yet he was destroyed. How so? Historians tell us, *orationis opus fuit, non morbi*; his death was the work of prayer, not of his disease. Such effects may your prayers have; what stubble can stand before the flame of prayer. Oh that our hearts were much inflamed in this great service.

Consider you are here in your possessions, in your lot; hidden when others of your brethren are not come to their

* Sicut pauperes spiritus et simplices ad predicandum elegit, ita astutos et duplices antichristus ad falsitatis predicationem assumet.—Greg. mor. lib. 12, cap. 5.

lot. Mark that place in Deut. iii. 18, Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh were come into their lot and inheritance, before the rest of the children of Israel: what then, should they sit down quietly? No, at ver. 18, they were not to sit down, but they were to pass over armed before their brethren. So God having provided for you, before many of your dear brethren and his good people, you are not now to sit down quietly in your own lot, but to go up armed before the rest of God's people, and prayer is your best harness.

You are here on purpose to pray; it is the end why you are come hither, that you might have liberty to pray. I am loth to speak it, I would I might not, you had praying liberty denied to you; when any met together in private to pray, you know it was their and your reproach. This place is your Gilgal, wherein the Lord hath rolled away that reproach from you. Oh, that your liberty might not degenerate into licence. You have now praying liberty, and if this be the thing you are come for, and now you have such an opportunity, will you not improve it? If a man leave one place of trading, that he may set up his shop with more freedom in another; and in the second place money be brought unto him, will he refuse to take money? This is your case, you could not have so free a trade for heaven as you desired, here you have leave to open your shops, and behold this day a praying opportunity, which I call money, is put into your hands; will you refuse it? consider you are come on purpose to pray.

In all likelihood the country shall be hidden, and you shall not lose your prayers. I will tell you what Mr. Brightman saith, whose memory is sweet and precious, he saith, There are three sorts of reformed churches: the first, the German; the second, the French, the Swedish, the Scottish, and Holland; the third the English; which are all different. For the English is ruled by prelates; the French, the Scottish, Swedish and Holland, is governed by presbyters; the German hold consubstantiation, and other things, which other reformed churches do not. Germany therefore he compared to Sardis, and thence foretold all the evils that have come upon it. Holland, Sweden, Scotland and the French, he compared to Philadelphia, and saith, though they have but a little strength, and the hour of temptation shall come, and some shall labour to shut their door, yet none shall shut it. It is

the rather to be considered, because he foretold the evils that came upon Germany. And why may he not speak true in this also? and then who would not pray for this people, seeing that he may not lose his prayers. Wherefore I entreat you in the name of God, now, up and be doing; arise, O daughter of Sion; arise, oh hearts of the people of God, that God might arise, and his enemies might be scattered. Awake, awake, and now up to prayer.

You will say to me, we are agreed, we must go to prayer both now and at home; but what shall we speak, that God may arise and that his enemies may be scattered.

Bring forth the Lord's engagements, and tell him how much he is engaged to help the churches: the Lord saith in his word that Babylon shall fall, Rev. xviii. 8, for strong is that God that hath condemned her; the Lord saith, Psalm cxxi. 4, "He never slumbereth or sleepeth;" the Lord saith in his word, 2 Chron. vi. 34, 35, "If his people pray when they go forth to war, he will hear and maintain their cause:" go and tell God, Lord, thou hast said thus and thus: thou hast said thou wilt neither slumber nor sleep; thou hast said thou wilt maintain thy cause; oh, then, arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered.

Tell the Lord how long he hath seemed to sleep, and that the time appointed for the church's deliverance is now at hand. Saith the Psalmist, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law," Psalm cxix. 126. And again, "Have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come, for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof," Psalm cii. 13, 14. This is the reason why the time is come. So go to God and tell him, Lord, thou hast stood still a great while, oh, now the time is come, men have made void thy law, the saints pity the dust and take pleasure in the stones of the wasted churches; it is time for thee to rise, "Arise, O Lord," &c.

Tell the Lord that the enemies are up already abundantly; tell him that ere long he will rise, though you do not pray: Lord, if we should never pray, wouldst not thou help the churches; and wilt not thou arise a little the sooner for our prayers? wherefore, "Arise, O Lord," &c.

Tell the Lord that all things are now ready; it is

an argument that God moveth us with to come in to him: Lord, we use thine own argument: Lord, arise, all things are now ready. When the wind is good, and when the servants of the ship are ready, and have got their tackling all ready, and the anchor is up, only the master is not come into the ship, they will send one to tell him, Sir, the wind is good, your servants are ready, and the ship is under sail, we pray you come away; so tell the Lord that all his people are up at prayer expecting him, and all the prayers of God's people are spread, and their hearts under sail, and nothing can be done till the Master come, until God himself come; come, therefore, O Lord, come away: "Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered."

SERMON II.

OF COURAGE.

A Sermon unto the Volunteers of the City of Norwich, and also to the Volunteers of Great Yarmouth, in Norfolk.

"My heart is towards the governors of Israel that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the Lord."—Judges v. 9.

Preached A. D. 1642.

"Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."—2 Sam. x. 12.

In these words are the speech of that brave commander Joab, which he made at the head of his army, being surrounded with many enemies, as you read verse 9. He divides his army into two parts, the one led up by Abishai his brother, the rest of the forces he brings up himself, and spake thus to Abishai and to the rest of his men: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men," &c.

In those words you have these two parts: the braveness of his resolution: "Be of good courage and let us play the men." The humbleness of his submission: "And the Lord do that which seemeth him good." Or, if you will, thus: an exhortation to true noble valour in the former part, "Be of good courage," &c.; and, secondly, an humble resignation of himself and cause and success into the hands of God; "And the Lord do that which seemeth him good." His exhortation is strengthened with divers arguments: "It is for our people." The Ammonites and Syrians are now about us, if you do not behave yourselves valiantly your people are pillaged, plundered, captived, murthered; and therefore "be of courage, and let us play the men." And for the cities of our God. Some think that by "the city of our God," is meant that city where the tabernacle was: but as Abulensis observes,* though in 1 Chron. xix. 13, it is read *city*, in this

* Omnes urbes Israel vocantur urbes Dei; quia Deus illas dederat Israelitis vel illa erat specialiter terra Dei.—Abulens. in 1 Chron. xix.

place it is read in the plural number, *cities;* and, as he saith, all their cities were the cities of God, because given by God, and because God in his worship and true religion was in their cities; and therefore, now, Joab seeing all the people were in danger, and the cities of God, the religion and worship of God, he breaks forth into this exhortation, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God."

I shall not at this time reach the second part; the humbleness of his submission and gracious resignation: only from his exhortation observe thus much:

In times of great danger, when religion is in hazard and the people of God are in danger, good courage is very requisite.

It is then good for good people to have good courage when the times are evil. This is that which Joab pitcheth upon, and is the only matter of his exhortation: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men." So David, when he was begirt and berounded with many enemies, "Wait on the Lord (saith he) and be of good courage." Some there are that do wait on the Lord but are not of good courage; some have good courage, or courage, but do not wait on the Lord. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage," Psalm xxvii. 14; both together; "and he shall strengthen thine heart," Psalm xxxi. 24. Good courage, then, is very requisite in evil times. Some think this belongs only to soldiers; but if you look into Haggai ii. 4, you shall find this commanded to all the people: "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord (that is the magistrates); and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest (there is the ministers); and be strong, all ye people of the Lord (there is the people)." And that you read, *be strong*, in the Hebrew, is all one with the word of my text, *be of good courage;* and if you will, you may read the words so: "Be of good courage, O Zerubbabel," &c. So that it lies upon all, in evil times, men and women, to be of good courage. For my better prosecution of this point, I shall do these three things:

First, Give the description of good courage, shewing what it is.

Secondly, Confirm the point.

Thirdly, Make application of all unto ourselves.

First. For the description of good courage you may take

it thus: Good courage is that gracious disposition of heart whereby a man, being called by God unto any service, doth adventure upon difficulties either in doing good or enduring evil, and that without fear.

Here are four or five things considerable in this description. First, Good courage is a gracious disposition. There is a moral boldness, and a natural audacity, and this is not good courage, for the former is in heathens, and the latter is in brute beasts. Job describes the horse after this manner: "He rusheth into the battle, he laughs at the trumpet, and his neck is clothed with thunder," chap. xxxix. This brute beasts may have, and therefore this is not the virtue I press upon you.

Again, There is a sinful desperateness whereby men are apt and ready to rush upon all that is evil, and are sinfully bold, and they think him a fool or a child that will not drink, and be drunk, and whore, and run into all kind of evil: this is not good courage. David, he was as valiant as any one of them, as ever the earth bare, and yet, notwithstanding, in the matter of sin he was very timorous.* Surely good courage is such a flower as grows upon a good conscience: a man, in truth, hath so much good courage as he hath a good conscience; and if that a man shall desperately run upon what is evil and sinful, his courage does degenerate into a foolish desperateness. "Wait on the Lord (saith the psalmist) and be of good courage; and again, I say, wait on the Lord." Good courage is hemmed in with waiting upon the Lord.

Again, There is a vaunting, bragging, boasting cavalierism which hath no true courage.† Such a cavalier was Rabshakah, who said, "With us is valour and courage;" when he defied the hosts and servants of the living God. Good courage is the health of the mind; this vaunting, bragging, boasting is the swelling of the mind, not courage.

Again, There is a fierce, angry, revengeful disposition,

* Fortitudo justorum est carnem vincere, propiis voluptatibus contraire delectationem vitiæ præsentis extinguere, hujusmodi aspera pro æternis præmiis amare, prosperitatis blandimenta contemnere, adversitatis malum in corde superare; reproborum vero fortitudo est transitoria sine cessatione diligere, contra flagella conditionis insensibiliter perdurare, bonorum vitam non solum verbis et moribus, sed etiam gladiis impugnare, in semetipsis spem ponere et iniquitatem quotidie sine ullo desiderii defectu perpetrare.—Greg. Moral. lib. 3.

† Tumor animi non est magnanimitas.—Seneca.

whereby men are ready to run upon cruelties: this is no good courage. "The righteous is as bold as a lion." The lion himself is merciful, not revengeful; if a creature lies down before him he will spare it.* I remember a story one hath concerning Malcolm, a king of the Scots. It seems there was one of his nobles who underhand conspired his death. The king having notice of it, he chose a day to go a hunting, and called many of his nobles to go with him, and amongst the rest he calls this courtier that was working of his death; and when they were in the field, he singles him from all the rest, bids them go on with their game, he had something to speak to him alone: saith he, I hear you are, underhand, working of my death: if you put poison into my cup, a woman may do that; if you set upon me with a company of rascals, thieves may do that; if you will put me to death, do it as a soldier, I will take my sword, take you your's, we will fight it out. The man fell down before him, and the king pardoned him, and gained him ever after to be his own.† This was true courage, but a fiery, cruel disposition is no good courage; courage is a gracious disposition.

It is a gracious disposition of heart. The heart, properly, is the natural element of courage, and therefore some do derive the word courage, so; courage, *quasi cor agit*, it is an action or motion of the heart. The truth is, the heart of man is the artillery yard where all the thoughts of courage train continually.

Again, I say, whereby a man being called by God unto any service. God's call is the ground of a christian's courage. This was pretended in Rabshakah's speech; "Hath not the Lord sent me?" And this was, in truth, the ground of Joshua's courage: "Be of good courage, have not I com-

* Leonum clementiæ multa indicia sunt, prostratis pareunt, in virus potius quam in fœminas sæviunt, infantes non nisi in magna fame perimunt.—Solinus.

† Si igitur animus tibi sit, si valeas, si audeas, absolve quod propofuisti, redde hostibus meis et sociis fuis quod promisisti: si me occidere stat animus, quando rectius, quando secretius, quando virilius? venenum parasti? mulierculis id relinquito, tortulo insidiarls? hoc et adulteræ possunt? ferro ex insidiis me aggredi decrevisti? hoc sicarii et non militis est officium, solus cum solo congredere, ut saltem prodito tua turpitudine careat, quæ per fidia carere non potest. Miles autem hæc audiens mox verbis regis quasi gravi per cussus fulmine ad pedes regios cum lachrymis et tremore cucurrit: cui rex noli timere (inquit) quod nihil a me patieris; cumque ei de cætero se fidelem amicum futurum promisisset, revertunter ad socios, hihil pænitus referentes.—Mat. Paris, p. 21, Hist. Willil. 21.

manded thee?" If a man ventures upon any design, and God's call doth not lead him to it, when he comes to make good his standing, the ground quakes under him, his heart trembles, his knees knock, his arms shake, and his heels begin to run. When a man is called to do a work by God, though the opposition and difficulty be never so great, he may encourage himself here; but I am called by God, and he will carry me through.

Again, I say, whereby a man being called by God unto any service does venture upon difficulties, either in doing good or enduring evil. One would think that it were a desperate venture, but indeed a brave venture, of the men of Jabesh Gilead which we read of 1 Sam. xxxi., which fetched away the dead body of Saul out of the hands of the Philistines. There being a great fight between the Israelites and the Philistines, the Philistines had the best of it, kept the field and buried the dead; and amongst the dead they find Saul, they cut off his head and fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan. And when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard of it, all the valiant men arose, and went and took the body of Saul from the wall of Bethshan. Here was valour, here was courage. Wherein was it seen? In venturing upon difficulties in doing good and enduring evil.

I add, All this must be done without fear: and therefore in Scripture these go together: "Be of good courage; fear not, neither be dismayed." The more a man's fears are enlarged, the more his courage is lessened; and the more a man's courage is enlarged, the more his fears are lessened. Good courage, it makes a man higher by the head and shoulders than the thing feared, though never so great: good courage lifts a man up above fear. Put all together and you have the description of good courage. It is that gracious disposition of heart whereby a man, being called by God unto any service, he does adventure upon difficulties, either in doing good or enduring evil, and that without fear. Let us now advance to the second thing, the confirmation of the point.

Secondly, In evil times, in times of danger, good courage is very requisite. In times of danger good courage is the strength of a man, it is the spirits of a man, it is the sparkling of a man's heart, it is the life of one's life. Saith Solomon, "The spirit of a man shall sustain his infirmity."

Without strength there is no bearing of burthens. Now this is the way to be strong, to stand under burthens in evil times: "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart."

Again, Evil times are full of changes, and good courage will keep us from the power of those. It is a good speech Seneca hath: He is a stout man whom adversity doth not quail; he is yet more stout whom prosperity doth not allure; but he is most stout of all whom the change of things doth not disturb.* And in another place, saith he, He hath no great mind that can be bent by injuries.† And evil times are full of injuries. Without courage a man will easily be bent by them; bent unto sin and bent unto what is evil. Had not the three children been men of courage, how would they have been bent to idolatry; but being men of courage, say they, "Our God is able to deliver us; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods," Dan. iii. 17, 18. Oh, my beloved, in evil times good courage keeps us from evil bending, and therefore in evil times good courage is very requisite.

Again, Evil times are very expensive. Then a man shall be called to lay out much; his estate, his house, his liberty, his body, his all: and no affection, no disposition so spending as courage; good courage will make a man spend and be spent for God. But if a man should expend and lay out all upon other things, they will not be able to quit charges. Good courage will make a man spend all on God, and be spent for God, as Paul was. Thus you see that in evil times good courage is very requisite.

Thirdly, If this be so, you see what our duty is; to be of "good courage, and play the men." You all know into what evil times we are now fallen, better than I can speak: are we not berounded with many enemies, the Syrians before and the Ammonites behind; if Joab were alive he could see the battle before and behind. In the prophet's time, he prayed "that God would open the eyes of his servant that he might see who were with him;" now we had need to pray that God would open men's eyes to see who are against them: certainly enemies are amongst us, within and without, at home and

* Fortis est quem adversa non frangunt fortier est quem prospera non alliciunt, fortissimus est quem vicissitudo rerum non deturbat.—Seneca.

† Magnus animus est quem non incurvat injuria.—Seneca.

abroad, before and behind, they are very many. Now the people of God are in danger, now the cities of God and religion is in hazard; and therefore, as Joab once, so now I may speak unto all, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." Be of good courage. That is my exhortation; notwithstanding the times be evil, yet be of good courage. Good courage now if ever is requisite; requisite for magistrates, requisite for ministers, requisite for parents and governors of families, requisite for these gentlemen that have listed their names for this great service of God and their country, requisite for all the people.

Requisite for magistrates. Good courage is always in a magistrate's commission; though times be never so peaceable they are to be men of courage, fearing God, much more in troublous times. Good courage is a virtue annexed to their place; and therefore as injustice from the hand of a judge is worse than from any other, because there is a special repugnancy between him and the sin;* so want of courage and neutralizing in a magistrate is worse than in others, because good courage is always annexed to his place.

Ministers, they must be of good courage. We read of divers valiant men, 2 Chron. xxvi. 17, 18, who withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, "It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord," &c. You may see who they were in the 17th verse: "Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord that were valiant men." Wherein did their valour appear? In that they withstood the king in doing that which was unlawful. These were valiant priests indeed, and it stands upon record, and that for ever. In times nearer to ourselves, we read of Dr. Latimer, that when the men of his order were to send new year's gifts unto the king, he sent a Bible with this posey written on the outside thereof: "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Was not Mr. Deering very bold with Queen Elizabeth, who told her, that though she once went, *tanquam ovis ad lanienam*, as a sheep to the slaughter; yet now, *tanquam indomiter juvenca*, as an untamed heifer. In evil times the ordnance and murthering pieces are planted against the house of the ministers,

* Peccatum majus ubi repugnantia major inter peccantem et peccatum.—Aquin.

against them especially, and therefore in them, also, good courage is very requisite.

Requisite, also, for parents and governors of families. Otherwise, if they have not good courage, they will quench the forwardness and zeal and courage of those that are under them. It is a lamentable thing that the carnal wisdom of a worldly parent should be the quench-coal of the gracious devotion of a godly child. Granatensis makes mention of a woman, that hearing her son run away in the field, she got some advantage of him, and put him to death, with these words: Runaway, thou art none of mine. And of another woman, that when her son was slain in the battle, she being at the funeral with divers friends, some wept and cried, *O duram fortunam!* O hard fortune! she cried, *O felicem fortunam!* O happy fortune! that ever I was so honoured to bear a child to die so bravely for his country. Parents must have courage; and there are these three things to move parents and governors of families unto it: the danger that is now approaching, the protestation that you have taken, the special opportunity that you have.

You that are parents and governors of families have the greater opportunity of serving the commonwealth and churches and people of God than others. Your children are your goods, nothing is so much a man's own as his child; your children are your best household stuff. One observing that it was the manner and fashion to bespangle their cupboards with plate when they made any feasts; when he was to make a feast, he got his children and set them on his cupboard's head: the guests asked the reason why he did so; saith he, These are my plate. Beloved, you have given your plate already to the service of your country; what if God will have this plate also to be given unto him?

Again, The danger that is now approaching may move you unto this. You know the greatness of the danger; how we are begirt with the Assyrians and Ammonites; and should the Ammonites prevail, I mean that malignant, jesuitical party prevail in the kingdom, what a dark and black day would it be upon England. The Lord be thanked, we know, partly, what a comfort it is to sit under our vines and fig-trees; but should they prevail, what would they do? yea, what would they not do? the honour and safety of our dear sovereign,

the liberty of the subject, the security of the parliament, the peace of the three kingdoms, the power and liberty of the ordinances; these are great mercies and much to be prized by us; and methinks every one should sit down and think with himself, What shall I give or do that my person should not be enslaved, that my wife and daughters be not abused, that my poor children be not massacred, that my house be not plundered, that my country be not betrayed? Oh, if there be any spirit, or valour and courage in any child or servant to serve God and his country, go on, O child, and prosper; do courageously.

Then, again, besides this, you may remember the protestation that you have made. You have protested before the Lord and the world, or should have done, that you will maintain and defend the person of our king, the liberty of the law and subject, the parliament, the protestant religion; and shall you not give up your children and servants, though never so dear and faithful, to make good your protestation?

But methinks I hear some say, It is a hard thing to part with my child, my only son, my only joy, the comfort and stay of mine age; oh, it is a hard thing to part with a child.

True, it is; and wouldst serve God and thy country with nothing? Is that child lost that Christ gains? I remember Origen observes, that when Abraham gave up Isaac unto God, and put the knife to his throat to offer him up as a sacrifice to him, then the Lord found him a ram, another sacrifice, and gave Isaac again unto him; and, saith he, that which you give unto God you shall receive from God: if you can give up your child, and lift up your hand with a knife to offer him up unto him, the Lord will give you that child, and that child above others shall be the father of many gracious. Methinks I hear that speech sounding in mine ears: "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them, they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate," Psalm cxxvii. 5. Your children are the arrows that the Lord hath given you into your quiver, if they be ready upon the string, will you break these arrows, or the spirits of them? They are made on purpose to meet your adversary in the gate; and now the adversary is in the gate, will you not let the arrow fly? Oh, methinks there should not be a father or master that hath a child or servant, but should say,

I will send one volunteer. What were it for such a town as this to have two or three hundred? But I know your readiness, the Lord bless it. Only I leave the exhortation of Joab with you, the words a little altered, Be of good courage, and if you cannot play the men yourselves, let your children and servants play the men.

The exhortation looks also upon them that have listed themselves in this service of God and their country in these dangerous times. Brethren, I have need for to speak to you, and my commission especially is to speak to you, I had need do it, for have not some freely offered themselves to this work, yet shamefully deserted it again? I say shamefully, for what greater shame? Marcus Crassus, amongst the Romans, caused the cowards to be let blood, giving this reason, That it was fit their blood should be shed in disgrace which they would not shed in the defence of their country. And if you look at Judges vii. 3, you shall find that when the hosts of the Midianites came against the Israelites, Gideon had gotten a good and well framed army together; but when word came from the Lord that the fearful should return, how many, think you, did return of them? Surely no less than two parts of three. The whole army consisting of thirty and two thousand. The divine story tells us that twenty-two thousand of them went back, and but ten thousand left. Twenty and two thousand not ashamed to be called cowards and fearful. So that I say, that I had need to speak to you, and to you is my commission, and if you please you may read my commission and your own duty together: Deut. xx. 2, 3, "And it shall be when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people;" not the captain, but the priest. What says the priest? Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be you terrified because of them. Therefore you see what I am commanded to speak unto you. Well, good sirs, and beloved in the Lord Jesus, be you also of good courage. And I have three words of encouragement to speak unto you.

1. Your work and service you are about, it is very honourable. It is observed to my hand, that when Solomon built the temple, he did not employ the Israelites about the meaner works, carrying of stones and drawing of water; strangers were put to that work; but the Israelites were employed to

be a guard about him. So did the most wise man in the world, Solomon, count it an honourable thing to bear arms and to be a soldier. Anciently soldiers were called *latrones*, because they were *a latere regis;* and now the latin word, *miles*, for a soldier, signifies a knight. When the children of Israel went out to battle, some there were that went into the field, and some that did stay at home; concerning those that stayed at home, it is said, that "she that tarried at home divided the spoil," Psalm lxviii. 12. As if they were only women, and the weaker sort that stayed at home; as if all that were worthy to be called men went into the field. In the triumphing psalm of Deborah, we read that some are condemned and some commended; those that were condemned, were such as came not forth, that came not forth to "help the Lord against the mighty," Judges v. 23. Those that were commended, were the volunteers that offered themselves willingly amongst the people (verses 2. 9). The truth is, that the volunteers of England, under God, are the bulwarks of England; and England, under God, the bulwark of the protestant religion. Wherefore, honoured brethren, be ye all of good courage, for your work and service is very honourable.

And as your work is honourable, so your work is safe. In times of war, the safest place is the camp, and whilst that those of poor spirits, that love only to be in their beds and in their houses, shall be pillaged and plundered, men of brave spirits, that are willing to be in the field, shall be secured. A valiant and courageous mind commandeth all things, says Seneca: he that commandeth death, commandeth all things, as the valiant man doth. Now, beloved, you see into what times we are fallen; of necessity things must either go well or ill: if things go ill, the worst is death, and what great matter is it to die for your God a little before your time; who would live when religion is dead? who would live to out-live his religion? Cicero tells us of some Indians that having many wives, when the husband died the wives strived to be burned with him, and she that was the strongest prevailed to be burned, and the rest went away very sorrowful, as having met with a great loss that they might not be burned with their husband; and do you desire to live a day after the protestant religion that you have been married to now for many years together? It is no great matter to live; the beasts, birds and

fishes live: this is truly great, to die well, honourably, freely, wisely; as Seneca saith, It is better to die in the field, for the cause of God, than die in one's bed by the hand of a sickness. It is storied of one Bibulus, a great Roman, that having obtained many victories, he came to Rome to ride in triumph, where a tile falling off the house struck him so deeply and mortally into the head, that he died of it. Thus may you die by an unworthy tile as you walk in the streets, or by the turning of some humour in your bodies; and is it not better, then, to die for the truth? Can you lose too much for Christ that hath lost so much for you? Death is the worst. And if things go well, I cannot but think it will go with the popish malignant party, as once with the Freislanders, when the Earl of Holland had overcome them; they took up arms to resist him again: whereupon he ordered that the doors of their houses should be made so low as they should always stoop when they went in, noting their subjection;* so, though the mercy of those that are in authority may let the houses of malignants stand, yet I make no question, but the doors of their houses shall be made so low, that they shall always stoop, as a note of their subjection; whilst you that stand for the cause, and country, and cities of your God, shall have the doors of your houses enlarged; and if a good cause have any interest in heaven, and the prayers of God's people hath any credit there, you shall undoubtedly in the end prevail, wherefore be of good courage, for your work is safe.

And as your work is safe, so it is also warrantable. I know it is objected, They take up arms against their king. I am persuaded there is not such a thought in the bosoms of any of you all, and God forbid there should. But there is much difference between taking up of arms against the king's person, and taking up of arms for the defence of the kingdom, without the king's command. David, though he were God's anointed, yet he was a subject unto Saul his king, and he took up arms to defend himself; he took up arms indeed, but if you look into 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, you shall find that David does impute that unnatural war that Saul his king made against him, to those wicked malignants and wicked counsellors about him. "If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; but if they be the

* Hist. Nether.

children of men, cursed be they before the Lord," &c. He does not say the king had done it, but lays it upon those that were about him, and therefore took up arms to defend himself against the malignants. David's example is our practice: and certainly if the parliament should not have a power to send for those by force of arms which are accused before them for their just trial, they should no longer be a parliament. Every court of justice hath a power to send for by force, men accused to be tried before them: now the parliament as king James speaks, is the highest court of justice; therefore, according to the known privilege of parliament, they do send a serjeant at arms for those that are accused, to be tried before them; and if they have power to send out one serjeant at arms, then they have power also to send forth a hundred, and so a thousand, and so ten thousand if need require. And if the accused persons gather into an army, how can the parliament send for them but by an army? So that when you consider the law of the land, or the law of God, or the law of nature, which is for a community to defend itself, your way and course is very warrantable, your cause is good, for that must needs be good that religion maketh so; your enemies are weak, for they must needs be weak that sin makes weak; your victory is certain, which the Scripture promiseth, and first or last the victory shall be to you. Put all together: your cause is good, your enemies weak, your victory certain, your service honourable, safe, warrantable: wherefore, "Be of good courage, and play the men for the people and the cities of our God, and the Lord do with you what seemeth him good."

This exhortation looketh upon all that heareth me this day, men, women and children; be you all of good courage in these sad times, notwithstanding the evil of the times; "Fear not, neither be dismayed." Did the Lord do his work by halves when he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt? Notwithstanding for men's unbelief some fell in the way to Canaan, yet he brought them into Canaan. Beloved, you are now again coming out of Egypt, for the Romish superstition, and that partly is called Egypt, Sodom, Babylon: you are now coming out of Egypt, marching up into the promised land and promised ordinances. Nothing can make you fall in the way but unbelief; wherefore be all of good courage, and

pray unto the Lord. Be all of good courage; thereby you shall be able to set upon great things for God, though never so great; thereby you shall endure great afflictions, though never so heavy; thereby you shall be untired and unwearied in the service of God, though the opposition be never so strong; thereby you shall honour the cause; thereby you shall conquer your enemies; thereby you shall encourage others, your courage shall beget courage; your courage will have an influence upon all the towns round about you, and make them of good courage, as I make no question but the courage and valour of London have had an influence upon your hearts, to make you courageous: so your courage will have upon others. What will they say when they come into towns, and return home again? I will tell you what: I was at such a town, and there they were working and fortifying their town for their country and king; and I saw the best man's son in the town go to the work, and the best man's daughter in the town carry a basket; and, father and mother, shall we sit still? Therefore put on, let the work never die for want of money; let not such a town as we are be base, be poor and low, and want courage, when on the one side ye have the sea, on the other side the river, on the other side the walls, on the other side, I hope, friends; within abundance of good people, and and above a loving God. Oh, therefore, put on, be all of good courage. I do but add some directions, and so wind up all.

1. Be sure of this, that you make sure of God to be with you. I mean, not only in the general causes, but in your particular; clear up your propriety to God himself. When David was in a great strait, his enemies had broken in upon him, taken away his wives, and then plundered all he had, his own soldiers began to mutiny, and thought of stoning him; what did he do? It is said, "He encouraged himself in the Lord his God," 1 Sam. xxx. 6. Therefore first make sure of this, clear up this your propriety in God himself. The sight of a great God under interest will encourage your spirits though dangers be never so great.

2. Never go out upon any design without God's promise, God's promise of assistance, acceptance and success. Joshua was a valiant man and brave commander, and yet we read of him, chap. vii., when some thirty men were slain, and others

fled, he fell down upon the earth much discouraged. Why? The Lord had promised he would never leave him nor forsake him, his enemies should not be able to stand before him; but he had lost the promise that God had given to him, and therefore was discouraged; but the Lord comes to him, and saith, "What dost here?" and brings him to the view of the promise again; and then a new spirit and new life came into him. God's promise is your encouragement; keep that always in your eye.

3. Take heed of all those things that will debase your spirits. These are three things especially: idleness, worldliness, false courage.

As for idleness, saith Seneca,* it is the burying of a living man. As for worldliness, saith Aquinas, it doth effeminate and set a man below himself. And false courage is a true enemy to true courage. If courage be laid upon the sense of the second cause, when there is an ebb of the second cause there is an ebb of your courage.

There were two sorts of spies that went into the land of Canaan. As for the first, we do not read of any hard use they met withal, and yet they were much discouraged, and discouraged the people, saying, The men of the country are giants, the cities are walled up to heaven, and the inhabitants ride in chariots of iron. The other spies met with ill use, and had not Rahab hid them they had been every man cut off; and yet they returned with good courage, and so encouraged the people, saying, "The men shall be meat unto us," &c. What is the reason of this? One would think, rather, that the first sort should be encouraged and the last discouraged, but it was not so; the reason is this, the first spies, that were discouraged, looked only upon the men and walls and iron chariots; went out in the way of sense; but as for the other spies, they looked upon God, upon his promise, and upon his providence in delivering of them; and thereupon returned and said, "The men of the land are meat unto us," &c. Would you not be discouraged but encouraged, take heed how you raise or how you lay your courage upon second causes; take heed of all those things that may debase your spirits, idleness, worldliness, and courage laid upon second causes.

* Otium est vivi hominis sepultura.—Seneca.

4. Again, be sure of this, that you keep your conscience clear. A bad conscience is very timorous; the righteous are as bold as a lion, but the unrighteous, that have any conscience left, are as fearful as a doe; be sure, therefore, that you keep your conscience clear.

5. And then, again, keep and improve all the experiences of God's delivering mercy. Beloved, how many delivering mercies hath God wrought for us the last year; truly it may be said it hath been the *annus mirabilis*, year of wonders; and all the year long God hath been known to England by this name, a wonder-working God. When any temptations arise to discourage, answer, Surely if the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would never have done all this. Experienced men are most courageous. Only make use of your experience as a stirrup to get up your spirits to the promise.

6. Again, Actuate, refresh and strengthen your love. True love is very valiant. Says the apostle, "Love suffers all things, it does all things." As one observes concerning a sheep, though it be so feeble and fearful a creature, that a little dog will make a whole flock run before it, yet, notwithstanding, you shall see, that if a great mastiff comes to take away a lamb from the ewe, the ewe will stamp and run at him. Why? Love puts it on. Do you, therefore, love your country? I know you do. Do you love the people of God? I presume you do. Do you love the cities of God? I believe you do. Often actuate, refresh, and strengthen your love; this will give courage.

7. In the last place, Whenever any discouraging temptations arise, before ever you parley with those difficulties and temptations, step in to God by prayer. Beloved, if you first parley with difficulties before you go to prayer, you will never have done; a thousand objections will be created in your minds: whereas if you first go to prayer before you parley with them: in prayer you shall have the sight of a great God, and the sight of a great God will make your spirits great. In prayer your heart shall be composed, for prayer is a soul-composing duty. In prayer you shall meet with the Captain of your salvation, and he will lead up your hearts that are ready to run away. In prayer you shall bring your souls to this frame, quietly to resign up yourselves, and cause, and success unto God; and a man is never more courageous than

in that frame, as Joab's courage and resignation went together. Are you presented with any difficulty and discouraging temptation? then say with yourselves, It is true, indeed, to attain to such an event, certainly it will be hard; notwithstanding, I know that my cause is good, my work is good, the people good; and, therefore, though the difficulties and temptations be never so great, I will give myself to prayer, and praying courage is good courage. Wherefore, my beloved, in the name of the Lord, pray, in these evil times; pray, pray, pray. And when you have done praying, then wait: "Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage; and again, I say, wait on the Lord." And what I say unto one I desire to speak unto my own soul, and so unto you all in these sad and evil times, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do with us what seemeth him good."

SERMON III.

THE DISEASES THAT MAKE A STOPPAGE TO ENGLAND'S MERCIES DISCOVERED, AND ATTENDED WITH THEIR REMEDIES.

DELIVERED IN A SERMON AT ST. MARGARET'S ON FISH STREET HILL, LONDON.

"*Thy destruction is of thyself, but thy salvation is of me.*"
"*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*"—Luke xiii.

PREACHED IN 1642.

PREFACE.

TO THE READER.—It is God's wont to warn before he smite a people, thereby walking himself after his own rule, Deut. xx. 10, 13, who would have no city to be destroyed until peace hath first been offered to it. The sword of the Lord is ever drawn, his bow bent, his arrows prepared, his instruments of death made ready, his cup mingled; yet he doth not use to pour down his plagues, until he hath rained a shower of mercy before them: he doth not surprise men at unawares. God never discharges his murthering pieces, until he hath first discharged his warning ones: *pax domini*, Luke x., "Peace to this house," was sounded at every door where the apostles came. All ages and nations will bear witness to this truth; the old world, Sodom, Pharaoh, &c.: but no nation or age can better subscribe to God's goodness and fair dealing in this, than we, who have been warned sometimes by prodigious signs, as by the appearance of that wonderful comet, A. D. 1618, as importing some strange changes which we have seen and heard since; and as if its last influence might seem to end in this island when it blazed over England, it was seen no more; and Herlicius Stargardensis, a noted astrologer, held, that its influence was like to continue between twenty and thirty years. Sometimes by his ministers, by his administration of justice, and dealing with other nations: how long hath the sword walked circuit in Germany and in Ireland? Sometimes by lesser and lighter judgments: how long hath the plague continued in this city without intermission? Sometimes by taking many godly out of the world, and the removing many others out of the kingdom, who were wont to stand in the gap; sometimes by a general withdrawing himself, pulling down his hangings, not assisting his ordinances, &c. And unless we will wilfully shut our eyes, how hath the goodness, patience, bounty, merciful and powerful dealings of God towards us, and for us of late, been as an hand put forth to lead us home unto him, to cause us to meet him, and take warning, that we might prevent these wasting calamities that are gathered together in a black cloud, as though they meant to empty themselves in a shower of blood upon our heads? But we are so far from taking warning, that we study to hasten our own ruin: almost every one instead of bringing his bucket of water to quench the fire that is already flaming about our ears, brings

their bellows in their hands to blow up these coals of dissension in all places, so that now not only is there a kingdom divided, but the head and the members divided, and the members among themselves, cities and towns divided, yea families divided, parents against children, brother against brother, and familiar friends become bitter enemies one to another; the most sure symptom and presage of a fearful desolation to fall upon all, unless some speedy remedy be applied to this desperate disease, and the great God himself become our physician and heal our distempers. I shall desire to commend these two Sermons (the third and fourth of this volume) to thy serious consideration: in the one thou shalt see there is a stoppage made of God's mercies, who was coming to heal us but we would not be healed; the causes are discovered and the remedies prescribed, that could we so go to work to open these stoppings, and bring God again into the way of his mercies; could we see our sins removed and God returned, I might then truly say that there would be yet hope for England: the other Sermon is a preparative to bear that cross that so many have already on their backs, viz. of being turned out of all our earthly comforts; a sad calamity indeed, but now too usual; and when so many of our neighbour's houses are on fire, why should we think to escape scot free that are as deep in sin as they? Being, therefore, forewarned, let us be forearmed, and get into God and his favour, as that one necessary thing for us all to look after, as the only means to keep us from sinking under the waves that flow in upon all, especially on God's people; experience shewing, that if we will live in the power of godliness, and not walk in the same excess of riot with the world, we shall make ourselves a prey, and had need to have our helmets on to catch the blows that fall upon us, and resolve to sit loose from the world, that we may suffer the spoiling of our goods with joy, and be able to say with that noble Spartan, who being told, 1. of the death of his children, answered: I knew well they were all begot mortal. 2. That his goods were confiscate: I knew what was but for mine use was not mine. 3. That his honour was gone: I knew no glory could be everlasting on this miserable earth. 4. That his sentence was to die: That is nothing; nature hath given the like sentence both of my condemners and of me. Now should we get a stock of faith, and learn how to use it, to live by it when our lands, our stocks, our trades, our friends, our wit, our shifts (as the ordinary means of our livelihood) shall fail us. That we may live not only above our fears and troubles and doubts, but above the world, above ourselves, in God and in Christ, in whom we may see supply to all our wants, satisfaction to all our desires, and have recompense for all our losses, and every thing that may make for our good and welfare: light in our darkness, life in our death, strength in our weakness, riches in our poverty; and comfort ourselves, that we serve a Master that will one day right all our wrongs, reckoning the injuries that be done to his as done to himself; so that we should not think much to part with our country, our children, our possessions, our life, if the world will take them from us, for Christ and his gospel's sake. All these, and much better than these shall be restored to us one day; and we may say thus to ourselves: Yet I am not miserable so long as my Redeemer is happy; he lives, and I shall live with him. Men may take from me my goods, but they cannot rob me of my grace; they may banish me from my country, but not from heaven; take from me my life, but not my happiness: no, my faith, my heaven, my soul, my happiness is in his keeping, that will safely preserve them for me, and me for them. But I fear I have held thee too long in the porch, I shall now open thee the door and let thee in, praying God to make those lessons as profitable to thee, as the Au-

thor's desire was they might both in his preaching them and his willingness to have them published for the public good.

J. A.

" So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men, and they fled before the men of Ai."—JOSH. vii. 4.

IN this chapter you have a treatise concerning Achan's sin, branching itself into three parts; one concerning the commission of the sin, the second concerning the discovery of it, and the third concerning the punishment thereof. As for the sin itself, the commission thereof, what it was, you read in the first verse, that the children of Israel had committed a trespass. God had commanded that all the spoil of Jericho should be consecrated unto himself, and that the first fruits of all should be his. Jericho being the first city that they took in the land of Canaan, by right it did belong unto God; all the treasure, silver and gold, wealth and goods that was therein, properly it did belong unto God. Now Achan he plays the thief, and does appropriate some of God's goods and wealth unto himself. This was charged upon him as a sin, and so upon all Israel, as at the first verse: keeping from God any thing that does belong unto him, is a sin. Now in the second place this sin was discovered by occasion of the defeat that was before the town of Ai. They passing on from Jericho, at the second verse, unto the town of Ai, they laid siege to it; but their siege was broken up, and three thousand men fled, and thirty-six men were slain, verses 4, 5. Sins committed in one city, will follow us unto another, and overtake us there. Oh what unexpected ways and means hath God for to bring out men's sin to light. Three thousand men flee before the men of Ai, and thirty-six men are slain, and this was made the means of discovery of Achan's sin; who would have thought that there should have been such a discovery as this?

The work was hindered by this defeat, and that sets them on work to search out the cause, and shews,

That afflictions should set us on work, to search out our sins, and the cause of them.

That sins shall not always be pocketed up, but shall be discovered, though never so secret.

That God hath strange ways to discover men's sins.

But why must the children of Israel be beaten here by the men of Ai, and why must one man's sin be punished upon all? Surely the children of Israel were in covenant one with another, and so being in covenant together, the sin of the one not being punished by the rest, was charged upon all the rest. As for England, either we are in covenant one with another, or else we are not; either there is a national covenant, or else there is not. If there be not a national covenant, as was among the Jews, why do we not rather say, the churches of England, than the church? And if there be a national covenant, the sin of one is made the sin of the rest, what sins do we bring upon ourselves. But they must flee before the men of Ai; why? Because that the men of Ai were to be destroyed with a great destruction. Therefore God does first suffer them to prevail, the more to embitter and stir up the spirits of Israel against them: this did provoke them.

Whence I take up these two observations:

The first is this: Where God is in a way of mercy towards a people, there sin makes a stoppage in his proceedings.

The second is this: When God intends utterly to destroy his enemies, he does first suffer his own servants, and dearest children to flee and fall before them.

Concerning the first:

First, Where God is in a way of mercy towards his people, there sin does make a stoppage in his proceedings; so here God was in a way of mercy towards his people, carrying of them into the land of Canaan, but in the way they sin, Achan plays the thief; mark what a stoppage this made in the way of mercy; so you have it in Josh. xxiv. 20. Though God be about to do you good, and have done you good, yet "if you forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, he will turn" from the good he is a doing, "and do you hurt, after he hath done you good." So in Jer. xxviii. 9, "At what instant I shall say or speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant it:" that is, at what time I shall give sensible testimony of good to a land or nation: "If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good," &c. So that sins committed against God when he is in a way of mercy, do

make a stoppage in those proceedings of mercy. There are these two or three reasons for it:

Sins committed when God is in a way of mercy, are a slighting of mercy. Amongst yourselves, if you be doing any special work before others, that they may take notice of you, and they slight your work, you will leave off work, and work no more; now, I say, when as God is in a way of mercy, and you then sin against him, your sins do slight mercy, nay then, says God, I will turn away; it will make a stoppage in this work.

Again, those mercies that come unto God's people, come unto them in the way of a promise. And God's promises they are either spiritual, concerning spiritual things, or temporal, concerning temporal things. If they be spiritual promises, concerning spiritual things, then they are absolute, bottomed and grounded upon no condition; as the promise he made that "he would drown the world no more," says the prophet Isaiah; such a covenant as he made with Noah, he makes with his people, that runs upon no condition: he doth not say, If the world goes on and serve me, I will drown it no more: but the promise runs upon no condition, and so the promise of grace runs upon no condition: for if it runs upon a condition of faith, God promises to give faith, God promises perseverance, upon the exercise of grace he promises to give the exercise of grace, all spiritual promises run upon no condition. But now outward promises run upon condition, and therefore if men do not keep the condition, God takes himself free, and will turn himself out of the way of his mercy. You have an expression to this purpose, Num. xiv. 34, "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days (each day for a year) shall you bear your iniquity, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise." Will God break his promise? As much as if he should have said, I have promised to bring you into the land of Canaan, upon such and such conditions; but now, if you do not perform the condition, I count myself free, and you shall know my breach of promise, that I will not give you the thing that I am about to give you.

God never gives his people any mercy, but he gives it them in a way in a way of mercy. He does not think it

enough to give them that which is mercy, but he will give it them in a way of mercy. As now in your gifts to God, if you be gracious, you do not think it enough to do that which is gracious, but do it in a gracious manner; so God in his gifts to you, will not only give you that which is mercy, but he will give it you in a way of mercy: but now if God should be in a way of mercy towards his people, and they sin against him, and he should go on to give them the mercy, they would be hardened in their sin, and so it would not come unto them in the way of mercy. Therefore, if God be in a way of mercy towards his people, and they sin against him, he will break off the course of his mercy, and go another way, and there shall be a stoppage made in these proceedings.

But you will say we see the contrary: who have more blessings, and outward mercies, than the church of Rome? Who more sinful? What adulteries, what idolatries, sorceries, opposition of saints and ministers? And you know what plenty is among them, and God goes on to give them mercy after mercy, outward blessing after outward blessing, and therefore this is not true, we see it in experience otherwise, that our sins do not make a stoppage in the proceedings of mercy.

But for answer hereunto, The thing is not true, God does not go on in a way of blessing and mercy towards them. Beloved, of all afflictions, it is the greatest affliction to be without affliction; of all judgments, it is the greatest judgment to want judgment: as you may see for this purpose, Isa. i., "Why should you be stricken any more; ye will revolt more and more." It is the greatest stroke not to be smitten, and the greatest affliction to be denied affliction, when there is use and need of it: now though the people of Rome, and that party flourish in the world, yet their souls are smitten, God smites them with blindness, and with spiritual death, so that there is a stoppage made in the proceedings of mercy.

But I rather answer it thus: When God is in a way of mercy towards his people, towards his church, then sin will make a stoppage. Those of Rome are no true church, the church was in Babylon, but Babylon was not the church; the church was in Egypt, but Egypt was not the church;

Lot was in Sodom, Sodom was not in Lot's family; Rome is called Babylon, Egypt, and Sodom; they are not the church of God; but if the church of God sin when God is in a way of mercy, a stoppage shall be made rather for them than for others, for these two or three reasons:

They are in God's house, and their sin is greater. The great house of God is as a great man's house, who hath some servants that doth his work abroad in the field, some that tend in his chamber, that are nearer round about him: if those servants that are near him be naught and vile, it makes more to the dishonour of the master, than if those were so that are abroad in the field; now God's people are a people that are round about him, near unto him, his household servants, and therefore if they sin when God is in a way of mercy, God will turn out of that way, and there shall be a stoppage made in God's proceedings.

Their sin is of all others the most scandalous, and therefore the worse, the more dishonouring to God, the more provoking. If two men be drunk, one a professor and the other not; why there is no scandal arises from the drunkenness of him that is no professor; but if a professor be gotten in, and made drunk, they are all so, what a scandal ariseth? And so, if two commit adultery, the one a professor, and the other not, the scandal ariseth from the professor; profession is the ground of scandal. And therefore, 2 Sam. xx. 12, when as Amasa was slain and laid in his blood, the people made a stay and went no further, till they drew him out of the way, and cast a cloth over him; so when a professor falls and lies in his blood, there is a stand made in people's duties and conversations; and therefore just that there should be a stop made in the proceedings of God's mercy.

Their sins are most against the remedy. Sins against the remedy, are the greatest sins: and therefore his sin is greatest that commits adultery being married, than his that commits fornication, though both be evil, because he sins against the remedy; now the people of God have more remedies against sins than others, more light, more grace, more means, more helps; and therefore if they sin when God is in a way of mercy, God will rather make a stoppage in them than in others. Oh, that I might leave this impression upon you

that are professors and godly, that you may take heed how you sin against God.

Why should this be, that so small a sin should turn the great God of heaven out of the way of his mercy? Achan commits but a small sin, and what a mighty stop is made in the way of mercy? So, David numbers the people, it was no great matter, and a plague breaks out presently; what is the reason, that for sins that are little and small, such a stoppage should be made in the proceedings and mercy of the great God?

For answer three things:

1. There is nothing small between God and us, and it is true; if thou hast but the least crumb of bread, it is a great mercy, because it comes from the great God; and if you commit a sin, though never so little in your own eyes, it is great, because committed against the great God; I may boldly say thus much, that men sin a great sin in saying their sin is small.

2. Sometimes what falls short in the greatness of the sin, is made up in the number of sins. Great sins do go alone, smaller sins do go by companies: as with creatures so with sins; you shall observe it so in the heavens, and in the air, and in the water, and in the earth: in the heavens, but one great sun, many less stars; in the air, you have but few great and kingly birds, the eagle she flies alone, but your pigeons that are lesser fly by flights; in the water your great whale goes alone, but your lesser herrings go by shoals; on the earth the great elephant goes alone, your lesser sheep go by flocks, and your hogs by herds; the lesser sands infinite in number, rocks fewer. And so with men's sins; great sins they go alone, but lesser sins go by companies, and oftentimes the number of your lesser sins do make up what is wanting in the greatness of your sin. A man may be drunk but once or twice in his life, in the gross act of it, but he may be so often in drunken company, and spend away so many hours which shall amount to drunkenness; a man may commit adultery but once in his life, but he may have as many unclean thoughts as shall amount to adultery. So, that what falls short in the greatness of sin, is made up in the number; and therefore say not, why should God for a

a little sin turn out of the way of mercy? it may be the number of your little sins amount to the greatest sin.

3. Beloved, God will make good his name to the utmost, and his name is, "A jealous God;" now a husband's jealousy ariseth not when he sees his wife commit adultery, but if he do but see her playing and sporting with a stranger; so God's jealousy ariseth, not only when we commit the gross act of idolatry, when we bow before an idol, but if we be sporting and playing with superstition; for God is a jealous God. And though the husband do not see cause enough to turn away his wife, because of her sporting, and playing, and dallying, he may see cause enough to deny such a courtesy; so God, though he does not give a bill of divorce for such a sin which you count lesser, yet he may see cause enough to make a stoppage in his proceedings of mercy. Thus the doctrine stands firm, when God is in a way of mercy towards his people, if they do sin against him, their sins may make a stoppage in his proceedings. By way of application;

Hence you may see what the reason is, why there is a stop made now of late in our England mercies. This last year God hath done great things for England, as ever England saw, and that man that sees it not, I shall think that Scripture hath taken hold upon him, which you have in Jer. xxvii. 5, 6., "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord, for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh," whether out of envy or malice, but when good comes upon a people, he shall not see it: but who doth not see what a black cloud is drawn over us again: when the waters swell and stand up, you say, surely there is a stop made; the waters do not run down as before, not long since justice and judgment did run down like a mighty stream; but now, how the waters swell, gather, and stand up again: wicked men lie in prison, and those not censured: priests and Jesuits lie condemned, and those not executed: the plague is begun, and that is not quenched; the sword hath begun to drink deep in our brethren's blood, and that is not sheathed: the wrath of our king is enkindled: divers of our parlimentary worthies accused of high treason; certainly there is a stoppage made in the proceedings of England's mercies; oh, beloved, this our sin hath done.

But you will say unto me, Shall there be a stoppage made for ever in the mercies of England?

You will find, for answer, if you look into Scripture, that there is a twofold stoppage of mercy: final and present: final, as God was in a way of mercy towards Saul, and was about to settle the kingdom upon him and his posterity for ever; but he sinned, and the Lord turned away from Saul and turned away from him for ever; there was a final stoppage of mercy made. Now though there be a stop made in the way of God's mercy towards England, I conceive there is not a final stoppage. And my reasons are these:

Because that though many difficulties and mountains do arise, yet we see how one after another they do melt.

And because God hath raised up instruments that are unwearied in his service, working night and day, and are unwearied in the work of the Lord.

As also because that the type of this work does speak as much. The children of Israel's coming out of Babylon, and building the temple, is a type of our coming out of antichristian bondage, the great reformation that is now begun: now then though there were many lets and hindrances by Tobiah and Sanballat, and others, they could never hinder it fully, but it recovered itself, and was driven on: so in this building and work of reformation, though the Tobiahs and Sanballats of the times may cause the work to cease for a time, the building shall get up, and shall not fully cease, but the work of reformation shall be driven on in the despite of all the enemies. Therefore it is not a final stop now made in England's mercies. But there is a present stop, as when the plague broke out in David's time; and such a stoppage is made now.

But what evil and hurt is in this, if a final stoppage be not made?

Is it nothing in your ears, and in your hearts, that the Lord should turn out of a way of mercy? you read in Judges ii., when the angel came with a message unto the people, and told them that the Canaanites should be as "thorns in their sides, and a snare unto them, they lift up their voice and wept, and they called the name of the place Bochim:" you shall be brought into Canaan, the promised land, but the natives shall be so mixed amongst you, as they shall be thorns in your sides, hereupon they lift up their voice and wept: and

so, though the work of reformation be carried on, the Canaanites may be left to be as thorns in your sides, until Christ come. Oh that we could lift up our voice and weep, that the place might be called Bochim.

When God breaks off in the way of his mercy, then his wrath breaks out; he does not turn out of the way of his mercy, but he turns into the way of his judgment. Why to a loving child this a very cutting word, Your father is angry with you; I may speak this to you, there is a stop made in England's mercy, and your Father is angry, this is much.

If there be a stoppage made in England's mercy though but present, there is an obstruction in all your comforts: you are sensible of the obstructions of your body, will you not be sensible of State obstructions, of Church obstructions? Suppose you were in Ireland begirt with the enemy, and were in danger to have your convoy cut off, that should bring you victuals and supply, would it not make you fear? Beloved, we have been begirt with enemies a long time, and God hath raised us up a convoy to bring us victuals; we do not know whether our convoy shall be taken away, though but for the present. Certainly there is a thief in our candle that does make our comforts smear out.

But what is that thief in our candle? It is apparent to us that there is a stop made in England's mercy, what are those sins, for it is a day of humiliation, that have made a stoppage in England's mercy?

This is that I especially aim at, that you may see what you are to be humbled for this day and others. Parallel our condition with others in Scripture, and we shall find six or seven things especially, that do make a stoppage in mercy coming to a people, and you shall find them in our land.

An unwillingness and backwardness to the great work of reformation, to the great work that God is now about, is one thing that doth make a stoppage in the proceedings of England's mercy. When the children of Israel were in Egypt, they groaned unto the Lord, God sent a deliverer to them, Moses, and they being vexed by their task-masters, after he came, they murmured, and for anguish of soul, hearkened not unto Moses; God bare with that, till he got them on the other side of the water carried them through the Red Sea, when they came there, though they did sin and murmur, God

did not swear they should not enter into Canaan, but at the last they made them a captain, and they would return back to Egypt; says God, seeing you are there, I swear in my wrath you shall never enter into my rest, but your carcases shall fall here; you shall neither go backward nor forward: we have a long time, the Lord look upon us, set under Egyptian darkness, and the Lord hath sent his messengers to you to draw you out, and you would not, or for anguish of soul you hearkened not; well, but now there is a tender of reformation made, and hath been lately: if people say now, What need this reformation; were not things well before? This provokes the Lord, and causes him to say, Your carcases shall fall. And yet oh how hath this been among us, what ado is here, says one; what need this work; were not things well before? 2 Kings x. 32., "In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short." What days were those? They were in a way of reformation, and they cut short the reformation; and in those days the Lord began to cut them short of mercy. At verse 18., he got the worshippers of Baal by craft; at verse 25., he slays them; at verse 29., they break down the images in the house of Baal: howbeit at verse 29, "From the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not," &c. Then at verse 32., when they thus cut short reformation, the Lord began to cut them short. You know what our Saviour Christ says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, and you would not; behold your house is left unto you desolate." Beloved, when Christ comes to gather us, as certainly there is a time when Christ comes a gathering, and if the people will not be gathered, then behold thy house is left desolate. God hath made a tender of reformation lately, among you, this is one sin that hath made a stoppage in the proceedings of your mercy, people have been backward and unwilling unto this great work of reformation.

A tempting of God does also stop and hinder the proceedings of mercy. They tempted the Lord, and the Lord's mercy was stopped.

You find in Scripture, people are said to tempt God; either when they doubt of God's presence, after God hath especially appeared to them: "they tempted God, and said, Is God amongst us?" after God had appeared to them.

Again, when a man does not rely, and live upon God's all-sufficiency, when God hath appeared in that way. It is said of the Israelites " they tempted God, and said, can God provide a table in the wilderness?" As Musculus observes well, The Israelites were not so silly, as to think God was not able; they knew God opened the rock, and brought them through the Red Sea, but this was the language of their conversation, " can God provide a table in the wilderness?"

A man is said to tempt God, when he does tie and limit God unto ordinary means, when God is in an extraordinary way. And so it is said of Ahaz that he tempted God, and would not take a sign; what is the meaning of that? that is that he would go in an ordinary way " why (says he) should I tempt God, and require a sign," and go in an extraordinary way? I will go in an ordinary way: when as God is in an extraordinary way of mercy towards his people, to tie God to ordinary means is a tempting of God. Now I appeal to you, whether or no, we have not tempted God, God hath appeared gloriously, oh yet we have said God is among us? how few live upon God's all-sufficiency, notwithstanding he hath appeared so gloriously; and we see no way and means for such a reformation as is spoken of, tying and limiting of God unto an ordinary way, when God is working extraordinarily. This is a second sin that hath made a stoppage in England's mercy, this tempting of God.

Abusing of God's instruments which he raiseth up for to do his work by, doth exceedingly provoke and make a stoppage in the mercy of God. There are two ways whereby his instruments are abused: either idolizing and deifying of them, or wronging, scorning and jeering of them, falsely accusing and condemning of them. The first way the Jews sinned, when they cried " the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," and deified that; well, says Christ, " there shall not be one stone left upon another." God raised up the king of Sweden, people idolized him, he was taken away and a stoppage was made in that way of mercy: on the other side scorning and evil speaking of the instruments of reformation, and falsely accusing them that God does set up, this makes a stoppage in mercy, Numb. xii., Moses was appointed by God to bring them into Canaan, mark how they speak against him verse 2., " And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Mo-

ses; hath he not also spoken by us?" see what follows, verse 9, 10., "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and behold Miriam became leprous," &c. Mark what a step is made, verse 15., "Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people journied not," only because they opened their mouths against this instrument of God that was employed in this work. So Numb. xvi. 1., Korah, Dathan and Abiram rise up against Moses and Aaron instruments that God employed in his service, you may see what became of it in the following part of the chapter, the Lord would have consumed the whole congregation, "And Moses said to Aaron, take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord." verse 45, 46. Oh, my beloved, I would to God we were not guilty here: the Lord hath raised up a blessed and happy parliament, and hath made them instruments of much good unto this kingdom; some idolize and deify them, others again have accused them as traitors, the great senators and judges of our kingdom, no less than traitors: thus have the instuments of the Lord been abused, and how can this but make a stoppage in our mercy?

What is this to us? we have not accused them, that is done above.

I pray do but consider the place diligently, Numb. xvi., it is said, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the two hundred and fifty princes, men of renown, rose up against Moses, but wrath breaks out upon the whole congregation, and the Lord would have consumed them all, why? because they were not humbled. And if upon all this evil that hath been done to the instruments of God, we have not been humbled, the wrath of God may break out upon us all, and justly it should be, that a stop should be made in England's mercy.

Carrying on the work of reformation, and the great affairs of the church, upon the shoulders of human prudence, will make a stoppage in the way of mercy. You know that when David brought back the ark, they were very cheerful, and went along withal, nothing fearing, at last Uzzah lays his hand upon the ark, and is smitten, a cloud ariseth, David is dismayed, a stop is made in the business, what is the matter?

The text tells us, they carried the ark upon the cart, and it should have been carried upon men's shoulders. So when God is bringing back the ark, men set it upon a cart, and upon the shoulder of human wisdom; oh, says one, there is no government appointed in the church, it is a matter of human prudence, and so will you cart the ark of God? look that God will make a stoppage in mercy. And this is another sin that provokes God to make a stoppage in our England's mercy.

As prayer and humiliation do exceedingly further the work of God in the hands of his people; so the falling and slacking of the hands in those two works, doth make a stop in mercy, and hath done in our mercy. In 2 Kings xxiii., we read there, that good king Josiah went a great way in the work of reformation; the law is brought out, his heart trembles, the images are pulled down, he executes justice upon Baal's priests; yet notwithstanding all he had done, "The Lord turned not from the fierceness of his wrath wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah," verse 26, 29, 30; he went out to battle with Pharaoh Necho, and Pharaoh Necho slew good king Josiah; oh, what a stoppage was made in Judah's mercy; what is the matter? let us enquire into that; here are two causes; at verse 26., you have mention made of Manasseh's sin, "The Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal;" the people were not thoroughly humbled for their father's sins: and good king Josiah goes up to war, and did not seek the Lord before, as he should have done. So that want of humiliation and slacking in the work of prayer made this stop. On the contrary, you shall read a notable place, Ezra viii. 21, 22, 23., when the Jews came out of Babylon to build the temple, they were way-laid by ther enemies, and in the midst of the field Ezra proclaims a fast; a strange kind of fasting and praying to be in the field, so it was then, in the field by the river's side they go to fasting and prayer: but Ezra might have had a guard from the king, why had he not? verse 22., "For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen, to help us against the enemy, in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying; The hand of our God is upon all them for good that

seek him, but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him: so we fasted and besought our God for this, and he was intreated of us." Mark, fasting and prayer was their convoy; oh, beloved, what will not fasting and prayer do, when we are beset with divers enemies? there must be these two, the slacking of these make a stop. As for prayer, first, you know how it was with the Israelites when they fought against Amalek, when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, when he let fall his hand, Amalek prevailed; slacking in prayer made a stop. And so likewise for humiliation; there are two things that are opposite to that, which makes a stop: spiritual pride, and also nice curiosity concerning the means of grace. Spiritual pride makes a stop. Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and had great revelations; but lest he should be proud, and a stop should be made in that mercy, a messenger of Satan is sent to buffet him. It is recorded of a Frenchman having read excellent lectures of divinity, some of his auditors came to him and desired him that he would print them, he was so puffed up withal; as he broke out into this blasphemy: Lord Jesus, how art thou beholden to me! If I had turned my wits against thee, how much hurt could I have done thee! whereupon he was stricken with such blindness, ignorance, and dulness, that afterwards he was two years learning the Lord's prayer; this I speak to shew what a stoppage, spiritual pride will make.

And for curious niceness about the means of grace, 1 Sam. vi. The ark being in the hands and country of the Philistines, they sent it back, and so the ark returning, God was returning; but at the 19th verse, the Lord smote of the people fifty thousand three score and ten men, why? because they had looked into the ark of the Lord: their foolish niceness and curiosity about the ark, what a stoppage it made in the way of mercy! It is recorded by historians, that before the great massacre in France, the protestants were grown so curious about preaching, that no preaching would down with them, but acute sententious preaching. Beloved, both these are opposite to humiliation; and where these two, humiliation falls, and prayer slacks, there is a stoppage made, then will the Lord say to mercy, Stand, go no farther. For the present, God be thanked, there is a day

of humiliation, and a spirit of prayer up in the field, but when of late the enemies began to fall, how did men leave off prayer, and began to insult over the enemies; the Lord saw this, and therefore a stoppage was made in England's mercy.

An unthankful receiving of the mercies that God hath given us, and a slight beholding of the great works he hath done before us now lately, is another sin that hath made a stoppage in our mercy. It is said, Ps. cvi. 7, concerning the Israelites, "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt, they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked him at the sea, even the Red sea;" there lies the emphasis, at the sea, even the Red sea that God carried them through. So you have a notable place for this purpose, Hosea ix. 14, 15, "Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts," they shall conceive, mercy shall be begun, but it shall not bring forth, why? at verse 15, "All their wickedness is in Gilgal:" why, how was all their wickedness in Gilgal? they had much wickedness in other places: but the meaning is, Gilgal was the first place they went into when they went into Canaan, and there they were circumcised, and there the Lord rolled away their reproach, and therefore it was called Gilgal; now to sin in Gilgal, in that place where the Lord had done so much for them, though they sinned in other places, yet the sin there was so great, as if all the sin were there, because that was a place of special mercy; "for there I hated them, for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more;" there is a stoppage made in mercy, when sin is in Gilgal, in the place of such and such mercy. So, my beloved, you all know what great things the Lord hath done for this place, you were brought exceeding low, into great straits, oh, poor afflicted distressed England; but in the midst of all your troubles and fears, the Lord created a parliament for you, and delivered you with great deliverances; and if after all this you will go on in the way of sin, and thanklessly regard all that God hath done, this provokes God to make a stop. Mark how Ezra reasons for this purpose, Ezra ix., they had committed a great sin in taking of the daughters of the country to themselves to wife, verse 10: "And now, oh, our God, what shall we say after this? for

we have forsaken thy commandments," Ezra xiii., "and after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our trespass; seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this:" see where the emphasis lies, not deliverance only, but such deliverance: "should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?" Now, my beloved, you see where he sets the emphasis, and truly have not we this word, *such*, written upon our deliverances; you were oppressed in your estates, and you are delivered from those manifold oppressions; you were oppressed in your consciences by the inventions of men, and you are delivered from those heavy oppressions in a great measure; you were in great danger to have lain in blood, you and your children, and you were delivered from that bloody war with Scotland; and your parliament worthies of late, delivered from a hellish conspiracy, I had almost said as bad as that of the powder plot: and now I say, after such deliverances, if you will go on still in the way of sinning, how just is it with God to say, O England, I thought to have done thee good, and to have built thee, but because he that was a drunkard before, is a drunkard still; he that was a swearer before, is a swearer still; he that was a sabbath-breaker before, a liar, and unclean person before, is so still: therefore I will now unkingdom thee, and unchurch thee; if after such mercies and such deliverance you shall go on in a way of sin, I will make a stop in mercy, and in all the good I thought to do; this hath made a stop in our England's mercies.

The last sin that makes a stop in England's mercy, is a worldly disposition, whereby a man hangs back unto the great work of God, and the glorious reformation that is now a doing. You know that when they came out of Babylon, and were to build the temple, the people were for their ceiled houses, and the temple went not on so long as they stuck to their cieled houses, but when once they were brought off from their cieled houses, the temple was built, and they settled. So now, the Lord is about to rebuild you, and build a temple among you; if our hearts be after our cieled houses,

how just is it with God to say, I thought to do you good, but you will not be at the cost; I know you would have your brethren in Ireland delivered, but you will not be at the cost, you that are rich will not lend twenty, or thirty, or a hundred pounds towards it; I thought to have gone on and purged the whole kingdom, but you will not be at the cost, you would have the pictures out of your windows, but you are loth to be at the cost to buy new glass; you would have preaching ministers in every congregation, but you are loth to be at the charge; this makes a stop in our England's mercy. Thus I have to my poor ability shewed you the seven sins that make a stop in the Lord's proceedings of mercy; the Lord grant we may lay them to heart, and be humbled for them.

We grant these are the sins that do make a stop in England's mercy, and the Lord is gone out of the way of mercy, and is angry: how shall we open a way to England's mercy; how shall we bring God back again, and how may the Lord's anger be appeased?

In answer to this, I shall shew you it is a hard thing to appease God's anger when it is gone out.

It must be done, and that quickly.

I shall shew you what you shall do, that you may do it.

Therefore it is an exceeding hard thing and very difficult to appease God's anger. God's anger is compared to a stream; "Tophet is prepared of old for the king (saith the text) and out of his mouth goes a stream of fire." It is hard to turn a stream, you may easily turn the water when it is in the gutter before it comes into the stream, but when it is gotten into the river, it is hard turning of it; God's wrath is a stream, it is hard turning of it.

When you do solicit God to turn out of the way of his wrath, and turn into a way of mercy, you solicit him to that which is not for his ease, that is a burthen to him. Though you think you have great interest in a man, if you solicit him to that which is not for his ease, you will hardly obtain: now God says in Scripture, it is an ease to him to be avenged on his adversaries; ah, "I will ease myself of myself of my adversaries:" when you turn him from wrath, you turn him from ease.

Again, there are but few to do it. If the sea break over

the banks, and there are but few to stop it, it is hard to do; if fire hath taken two or three houses in a street, and but few to quench it, it is hard to do: the fire of God's anger is broken out, and there are but few to quench it: it is a hard thing, therefore.

Again, God seems to be engaged in the way of his wrath. God walks according to his word. Now, says God, you would have me return again to the way of my mercy, and leave off mine anger, and for this purpose you tell me you do pray and humble yourselves and reform; but was it not so in Josiah's time? his heart melted, and he prayed, and broke down the images and pictures, and the offenders, Baal's priests, were punished; nevertheless I turned not from the fierceness of my wrath: why should I turn from mine anger now, for your sakes, more than in Josiah's time? Oh, it is a hard thing to turn God from his anger.

But it must be done, and done quickly. If a fire be broken out, and not quenched quickly, it is more hard to quench; if the sea break in at a place, and be not stopped quickly, it is more hard to stop. Run in and make an atonement quickly, says Moses to Aaron; it must be done quickly.

What then shall we do? Do as Joshua did. There are six things that Joshua did here, when they fled before the men of Ai. 1. He was very sensible of God's stroke that was given to them, for he says, Lord, would we had been contented in the wilderness. 2. He was humbled under God's hand, for it is said, he rent his clothes, and fell down upon the earth. 3. And he prayed, and cried mightily unto God, as you read in the chapter. 4. And he put away the evil of their doings. 5. And he punished Achan the offender. 6. He made a holy resignation. And there must be a concurrence of all these six things if we would bring God back into the way of his mercy towards England.

We must be sensible of God's stroke. Though men be greatly afflicted, yet if they be not sensible of their affliction, and of the stroke that God gives them; says God, I have spent one rod upon them, and they do not feel it, I will lay on till blood come. God will make men sensible of their afflictions, and of the afflictions of the church, else he lays on more.

Again, Though a man be very sensible of God's stroke and

hand, yet, notwithstanding, if he be not humbled under the hand of the Lord, God will not exalt him; for, says the Lord, I have promised, indeed, that if men humble themselves under my mighty hand, they shall be exalted; and I have said, if the people, upon whom my name is called, humble themselves, I will hear. He humbled himself much. This will mortify your sins as your sins mortified and took captive your duties, and this must be done thoroughly. And to move us to it, take notice of the general darkness that is in the land, how few know what they would have in a way of reformation, what is agreeable to God's way. Ezek. xliii. 10, 11. The way to see stars in the day, is to go to the bottom of a well. But now here is a company not humbled, what fashion have they left since; wherein does it appear that you are more humbled? this must be.

Though that a man be humbled, yet, notwithstanding, if he does not pray and cry mightily to God, he cannot fetch God back again, for, says God, I am engaged to my word, and I walk by rule. When I threatened Nineveh, the king went from his throne, and went in sackcloth and ashes, and they cried mightily unto me; and do you think if you do not cry mightily, that I will return in mercy to you? Oh, says God, I have given you more than Nineveh, you know more and you must do more; they cried mightily, and shall not you cry mightily? We must pray more than ordinary; so did Moses; and for motives to it: 1. It is all that some of you can do: you cannot help other ways, by building God an house, lending money, &c., but you may pray. 2. If you be idle, you will envy those that do pray; for it is a sure rule, those that stand by will envy the workmen; and what that will do you may see in Cain's envy of Abel when his sacrifice was rejected. 3. The scales may seem to hang even, it may be your grain of prayer may turn them to mercy. 4. The Lord seems to be going, he is rising: when the judge sits still the malefactor does not lift up his voice and cry after him; but when the malefactor is condemned, and the judge riseth, and goes off the bench, then the poor malefactor lifteth up his voice, and cries, Good, my lord; good, my lord. So when God is rising and going off the bench shall men cry, and cry mightily unto him; pray, and pray mightily unto him. Beloved, the Lord seems to be going off the bench; oh, you

that never prayed, now pray; you that have despised prayer and praying-meetings, now pray; you that have a heart to pray, pray now, and cry mightily unto the Lord your God.

Though a man does pray, and cry mightily unto God, yet, notwithstanding, if he does not turn from the evil of his doings, all is nothing. Yet, says the Lord, I am constant to my rule, and I have promised, Isa. lvi. 9, "If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger and speaking vanity." If you put away the evil of your doings, what then? Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer presently; thou shalt cry, and he answer sensibly, and say, There am I. And so Judges x. 14. they having come and cried to the Lord, the Lord gives them this answer, "Go and cry unto the gods which you have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said to the Lord, We have sinned; do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee, deliver us only we pray thee this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them and feared the Lord." They cried before, but now they prayed and put away their strange gods; "And his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." So now will the Lord do when people are sensible of his hand, and are humbled, and cry, and cry much unto him, and put away the evil of their doings: this will prevail. Wherefore, beloved in the Lord, let us now join together in this work, and for the Lord's sake put away the evil of your doings. All you that hear me this day are of three sorts, either such as do live upon your lands, or such as live upon your trades, or such as live by keeping taverns and ale-houses. If you be such as live upon your lands, then think, and say with yourselves, I see there is a stoppage made in England's mercy, come, oh my soul, it may be it is my sin hath done it; it may be I have lived so much upon my lands, that I have lived little or nothing upon Christ; I will learn to live more upon Christ and less upon my lands. If you be such as live upon your trades, say, Husband, wife, children, servants, it may be it is our sin that hath made this stop; our lying, our false dealing, our breaking of the Sabbath, selling upon the Sabbath for gain; it may be it is our poor family that hath made this stop; let us put away the evil of our doings. If you be such as keep taverns and ale-houses, say, It may be it is the drunkenness

that I have suffered in my house, the thousands of oaths that are sworn in my family; for my part I will never have Ireland's blood lie at my door, therefore, servants, children, friends, I charge you, no more lying, no more swearing, no more Sabbath-breaking; for the Lord's sake, and for our poor brethren's sake in Ireland, let us put away the evil of our doings. You that have been drunkards, swearers, or adulterers, put away the evil of your doings; it may be this will bring God back again.

But though there be this, yet unless the troubles of England, the Achans be brought forth to punishment and thrown overboard, the sea cannot be appeased, the storm will not down. For, says the Lord, I am the same God that I was when wrath brake out upon Israel; then stood up Phinehas, and slew Zimri and Cosbi, and my wrath was stayed. When wrath broke out in Joshua's time, Achan was brought forth and punished, and so my wrath was stayed. Do you think that I will take less at your hands? Therefore let us pray that the Achans may be brought forth, and when they are brought forth, justify the worthies of the Lord, own them, guard them, and stand by them. And when the work is done, rejoice with fear and trembling, wash your feet in the blood of the wicked, and give glory to God, and say, Blessed be the Lord, who only doth great things; marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; who would not fear thee?

He made an holy resignation of himself to be at God's disposing, so we may see Araunah did, 1 Chron. xxi. 23: "Then Ornan said to David, Take it to thee," &c. He gave up his threshing-floor, and his oxen, and his threshing instruments; those things that were his livelihood. So should we offer up our shops, our trades, yea ourselves and all we have to God.

Thus you have heard, when God is in a way of mercy, sin does make a stoppage in his proceedings. You acknowledge there is a stoppage made in our mercy; you have heard that those sins are as thieves in our candle, that do smear out our comforts; you have heard what a hard thing it is to bring God back to mercy again; you have heard the work must be done; and you have heard what to do: wherefore let every man, as in the sight of God, go home and think, and say, and resolve with himself, I have not been much affected with Ire-

land's condition, I confess it, the Lord forgive me, but I will look more into it than ever I have done; I have not been much humbled for my own sin, and the sins of the time, but the Lord pardon it, and I will be more humbled; I have not cried unto the Lord, but from this day following I will cry mightily unto the Lord my God, it may be he will return. And I will put away the evil of my doings: I have been an unclean person, I have been a Sabbath-breaker, and have been proud of this coat, and that gold lace; I will be proud no more, farewell all bad company; and I will pray that justice may be done upon all Achans and troublers of Israel, and when it is done I will rejoice with trembling. And thus I have done the first doctrine: when God is in a way of mercy towards his people, there sin makes a stoppage in his proceedings.

SERMON IV.

CONTAINING SOME COMFORTABLE DIRECTIONS FOR SUCH AS HAVE BEEN, OR MAY BE DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOUSES, GOODS, OR COUNTRY.

PREACHED IN 1642.

"*Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens.*"—LAM. v. 2:

WHEN I consider the estate of this kingdom, this country, and this town; I cannot but fear, notwithstanding the speech of accommodation, that evil is now approaching. Our brethren in other parts of this land and in Ireland, are thrust out of their habitations; and what are we better than they in other places? We are as sinful as others, as secure as others; and therefore why we should not fear their miseries I know not. That therefore you may not be unprovided in the evil day, I have made choice of these words, that in some measure we may be prepared for that condition.

The words are part of the church's lamentations, penned by Jeremiah, in which there are two things that are most considerable.

First, The matter of their lamentation.

Secondly, The manner.

First, The matter that they had lost their goods.

Secondly, That those their goods were given, and "turned unto strangers."

The goods lost are their inheritance, and their houses, their lands, and their habitations. Their lands were not such as they had purchased with their monies, but such as did descend upon them from their forefathers by promise. "Our inheritance is turned to strangers," &c.* It is a great loss to lose one's lands, it is yet more to lose one's inheritance, it is yet more to lose one's house and habitation, it is yet more that they should be given to strangers. This was their con-

* Contingit enim ali juando ut quis amittat prædium suam, agros et vites, tamen domus ejus maneat intacta.—Calvin in locum.

dition, whereupon they said in verse 1, "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach." Whence I take up this observation:

That it is a matter of great lamentation for God's people to be driven from their houses and inheritances, and for strangers and aliens to be brought into them. When the Jews were in Babylon, and remembered their former estate and condition, they sat down and wept by the waters of Babylon. Saith the psalmist, "We sat down and wept when we remembered thee, O Zion," Psalm cxxxvii. 1. This is matter of tears and weeping; a condition in itself exceeding sad and very lamentable. Which truth, that I may more fully open to you, and apply to ourselves according to our occasion, I shall deliver myself these four ways:

First, Shew that it is a sore and heavy affliction for a man to be driven from his habitation, and aliens to be brought into it.

Secondly, That it is such an affliction, as God suffers his own servants to fall under.

Thirdly, Why God suffers his own people thus to be driven from their houses and habitations.

Fourthly, How a man should prepare for the evil of that condition, and carry the matter so as he may have comfort and supportance in that estate.

First, I say, that it is a sore affliction, and matter of great lamentation, for a man to be driven from his house and habitation.

His house and habitation is the meeting place of all his outward comforts; the seat and centre and receptacle of all those outward blessings that he doth enjoy in this world. If he hath riches, they do meet him there; if friends, they do meet him there, if rest, quiet, peace, sleep, they do meet him there. There are all his pleasant things laid up. If he hath any money, choice gold or silver, left by his father, which he will not part with, but keep for a remembrance of the dead, there it is laid up. If he hath any choice linen or household stuff that was left by his mother, which he will not sell for any money; where are they laid up, but in his house? And therefore the church, in Lam. i., complains, that when the enemy came to rifle and plunder their houses, the adversary had spread out his hand upon all her pleasant

things. Now whence is grief, but from the losing that which a man counts pleasant? And for this cause, some say, the valley of Megiddo was so mournful a place, because it was the valley of Hadadremmon;* that is, say they, the valley of the cutting of their pleasant things. Zech. xii. 11. So that when a man's house is spoiled, and he is outed, it is as it were a little valley of Hadadremmon, a man's house, &c. As a man's house is the nest where all these eggs are laid, and therefore when a man is driven from thence, the meeting place of all his outward comforts, surely it must be an exceeding sad thing and very lamentable.

To say nothing of the reproach that doth come thereby, or of the violence that doth come therewith; it is the judgment threatened, threatened against the wicked, and those that are most ungodly. The contrary is often promised unto God's people: "They shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them: they shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands: they shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble," Isa. lxv. 21, 22, 23. On the contrary, when God threatens evil to a place and people, this is the evil that he denounceth; that he will drive them from their houses and habitations, and that others shall be brought into them: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein; thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof," &c. Deut. xv. 28, 29, 30. Now is it nothing for a man to go up and down under the wounds of a threatening? Saith Paul, "I bear about in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." But such an one may say, I bear in mine estate and name and body, the marks of the threatening; oh,

* LXX. Legunt Hadadremmon, sicut planetus mali granati quod in campo succiditur; quia fortasse quo tempore occisus fuit Josias mala punica occisa sunt, quæ Judæis erant in deliciis. Theodor. similitudinem sumi putat ab eo, strepitu qui a lignatoribus editur cum mala punica succiduntur.

the threatening hath taken hold upon me. As of all mercies, it is most comfortable to receive a blessing in the way of a promise; so among miseries, it is the most lamentable to meet with an affliction in the way of a threatening: therefore matter of lamentation hereby.

Again, A man loseth many, if not most of his opportunities of doing good and receiving. "Make yourselves friends of your unrighteous mammon (saith our Saviour), that they may receive you into everlasting habitations," Luke xvi. 9. But if this unrighteous mammon fail, how shall a man make him such friends? So long as a man is at home, and hath a habitation to resort unto, he hath many opportunities of doing good, and receiving good into his family. He may pray, read, meditate, sing, and have a little church and heaven on earth.* If God give a man any notion or knowledge out of the Scripture in his chamber, when he hath a family he may come down and communicate it unto them. He may there receive strangers, for which many have been blest. There he may give a hiding, a resting place unto the saints, for which many have been hid themselves. There he may exercise good duties, the only way unto heaven and happiness. When he is thrust out, and strangers brought in, he doth therefore lose many of these opportunities; and therefore how justly may he take up this lamentation and say, Have pity, have pity upon me, oh all my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me. This condition is very sad, I am not able to express it in words, and praised be the Lord that your experience cannot preach it.

Secondly, Yet God suffers his own people and dear children many times to fall into this condition. Our Saviour Christ himself, who bare our sins, had not whereon to lay his head. The apostle tells us, Heb. xi., that many saints wandered up and down the world in woods and caves, of whom the world was not worthy. They did not only wander, and were removed from their own houses; but, as Chrysostom observes,† they were not quiet even in the woods: they

* Unum quod equantumvis exiguum tuguriolum fieret cœlum quoddam et superaret omnia omnium regum palatta.—Luther.

Ipse Deus hospitiore cipitur. Cette enim scimus ipsum Deum domi nostræ esse, apud nos pasci, cubare, re puescere quoties bonus aliquis frater ob evangelium exulans ad nos venit, et a nobis hospitio ex ipitur.—Luther.

† Non solum non habebant propriam domum intra civitatem, sed neque in

did not only want their own house in the city, but they wanted a quiet seat in the wilderness.

Four especial causes there are, or occasions, as Musculus observes* whereby men have been driven from their houses and habitations. First war. Secondly famine. Thirdly inhumanity, cruelty, exaction of evil men and magistrates. Fourthly, want of liberty in the matter of religion: and in all these respects God's people have been driven from their houses. First by famine and outward scarcity: so Abraham, so Naomi, so Jacob and his family, when they went down into Egypt. Secondly by war: so the Israelites when they were carried into Assyria, and the Jews into Babylon. Thirdly; by the inhumanity, cruelty, and exaction of evil men and magistrates: so Joseph and Mary went down into Egypt. Fourthly, by want of liberty in the matters of religion: so it is said many of the saints in Jeroboam's time left their houses, and went down to dwell in Jerusalem under Rehoboam, 2 Chron. xi. 14, 16. "The Levites left their suburbs, and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem. And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came unto Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers." So that we see this condition, though sad, is no other than what may, and doth, and shall befal the servants of the Most High God. In the churches since Christ what men of note have there been, but have fallen under this condition? Cyprian, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, all by violence, one time or another driven out of their habitations and forced to leave their houses. In times nearer to ourselves, Calvin driven from Geneva, because especially he would not administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper to some that were very scandalous: you know the story of Galeacius Caracciolus, you may read it in Mr. Jewell's life; to this purpose described in English and set down before his Works. Doctor Humfrey† also, relating his life, tells us how he was

solitudine propriam et quietam sedem habebant; quippe non dicit apostolus sedebant in solitudine, sed cum illic essent fugiebant et illine expellebantur non solum exteria que inhabitari poterat, sed etiam ex inhabitabili.—Tena in Heb. xi. Chrysostom in Heb. xi. αλλα και εκ ιο ʼΙες εφευγον. &c.

* Musculus in Ps. xciv. page 714.

† Certe qui me hic nolunt esse si esset integrum nus quam vellent vivere. Ego vero cedo temporibus, et si quam ille amea calamitate voluptatem capiant eam nihil impedio; quodque suis precatus est. Aristides cum ire in exilium

expelled the college, and at once suffered a threefold banishment, who taking his leave of the college in a solemn oration, breaketh forth into these expressions: Well surely those that would not have me live here, if it were in their power, would not have me live in the world. But I give place to the times, only wishing, as Aristides when he went into banishment, and praying that none of you all hereafter may think on me: and so farewell all studies, farewell these schools and seat of learning, fare ye well, O young men, fellows, friends, brethren, yea mine own eyes. Ye know how it fell out with many of our brethren in England, Tyndale, Rogers, Palmer, and divers others. Our Saviour saith expressly, "when they persecute you in one city, flee unto another." "And when you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains." Matt. xxiv. Let me allude and say also, when you see the desolating army, the army that maketh desolations in places where it comes, that abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, the highest court of justice, then let those that are in England also flee unto the mountains.*

But God hath promised the contrary, that he will plant his people surely with his whole heart, and they shall be no more removed.

You must distinguish of times: some promises are made to all times, some promises are made only to some times, and are to be fulfilled especially in the later times, the end of the world, when the Jews are converted: when the Jews are called, the enemies of the churches shall be all destroyed, and then God's people shall be planted in their houses, and no more removed, as Isa. lxv. Who would not pray for this time?

But besides you know God's promises are of two sorts, such as are made absolutely, and such as do run conditionally according unto the nature of that good thing which he promiseth; some good things promised are absolutely good

id ego nunc Deum opt max. preco ne mei posthac cuiquam in mentem veniat valete, omnes valete, Humfred. in vita Juelli, page 75.

* Sed id tempus in hac Angliorum Ecclesia Francforti exulante multi nobiles et alioqui variis Dei muneribus illustrati convenerunt. Doctor Humfred. de vita Juelli, page 87.

for us, as pardon of sin, grace, and the like, and thus God's promise is made absolute to the elect in Christ: some good things are but conveniently good for us, and conditionally, as degrees of grace, comfort, and outward blessings; and concerning these God's promise is made conditionally, which condition if we break, he is at liberty as in this case.

Thirdly, But why doth God suffer this to befal his own people; that his own servants and dearest children should be driven out of their houses and habitations?

In general it is for their good: we read of a vision which Jeremiah hath in chap. xxiv., of two baskets, the one of good figs, and the other of bad; the good figs were the good people of the kingdom, the bad figs were the wicked, both these sorts of figs are said to be in baskets, which is a vessel whereby we carry fruit from one place unto another, setting forth unto us the moving condition of God's people, and how they were to be carried to Babylon, so it is explained, verse 5, "Thus saith the God of Israel, like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." That is for the good of the good people, that they should be thus removed for their good, that they should be driven from their houses and habitations, for their good they should be driven from all.

But can it be for men's good to be carried and driven by violence from house and habitation, by those that are profane wretches, and very wicked?

Yes. Hereby first a man may be, and is, if godly, emptied of that slime and filth that did lie within him. It is written of Moab, Jer. xlvi., that because she was settled upon her lees, and not removed from vessel to vessel, their scent remained, so that to be removed from vessel to vessel, from one place to another, from one country to another, one house to another, is a means to take away the filth and scent of sin that is in the soul. The sea water though it be exceeding salt, and very brackish, yet if it run through several earths, the brackishness is lost thereby, as we find in all sweetest springs which, as philosophers say, come from the sea, and lose the saltness of the sea water by running through the earths: and in experience if you take water, though it be salt in your hand, yet if you cause it to pass through divers

earths it will lose that saltness: so that though there may be much saltness and brackishness in the spirits of men, yet if the Lord by his providence cause them to pass through divers earths, it is a special means to lose that brackish, brinish disposition, and to grow more quiet, sweet, and savoury.

Again, thereby sometimes the saints, though unwillingly, are carried from greater judgments that are coming upon the places where they dwell and live. As it is written of Lavater, that being in an house, was violently occasioned from it, and when he was gone, the house fell down to the ground. Lot though violenced, and pulled, and driven from his habitation in Sodom, yet thereby he was drawn out of the fire, so it is many times with other godly.

Thereby also truth and knowledge is carried and scattered into other places, many shall run to and fro, "and knowledge shall be increased," Dan. xii., and that is a cause-all, and, Acts viii. 4, therefore they that were scattered, &c.

Thereby a man is fitted and prepared for God's own house, and those revelations and manifestations that God hath to communicate to him concerning the house of God. A man is never more fit to see the beauty of God's house, than when he is driven from his own. When Jacob was driven by his rough brother Esau from his home and habitation, the first night he was fain to lie in the field upon the cold ground, but then and there the Lord appeared to him, and he called the name of that place Bethel, that is, the house of God, Gen. xxviii. When did God communicate so much of his mind concerning the churches to Daniel, but when he, with other Jews, was carried from Judah into Babylon? When did God reveal so much of his mind concerning the churches under the New Testament, unto John the Evangelist, as when he was in Patmos, a banished condition? Rev. i. This is God's way, he will first unhouse a man before he will shew him the beauty and glory of his own house: and is not this for our good; who would not be quiet when he is driven from all?

Hereby also a man is received from the world, and taught to live upon God himself, when Abraham and the patriarchs were called from their own houses, then they looked for a habitation, a city that had a foundation. "The widow that

is desolate (saith the apostle) trusteth in God:" and when is a man more desolate, than when he is driven from all? * The swimmer will not commit himself to the stream whilst he hath any thing to rest upon, no more will men leave themselves at length upon the stream of God's mercy, whilst they have anything at home to live upon. Chrysostome saith, a tree that grows by the highway side, will hardly have any of its fruit come to ripeness, but the passenger will one or another pull it off before it be fully ripened; so, saith he, those that grow by the highway side, in the way of the world, and are always standing there, will hardly bring any good work or duty to perfection. A man whose heart cleaves to the world is like unto it: he that cleaves unto vanity, is made vain thereby, as he that cleaves unto God, is like unto God: so long as a man is fixed in the world, and settled there, he cannot settle upon God himself, the way to be settled on God, is to be unsettled in the world; and because the Lord sees that some of his own people do settle too much in the world, he concludes with himself saying, I will take an order against this distemper, I will unsettle you in the world, that you may settle upon myself. Thus God works good out of this evil. But though his providence do work good out of this evil condition, yet in itself it is sad, and matter of great lamentation.

And if so, why should not we more lament our brethren in other places? Our brethren in Ireland and in other parts of this kingdom, upon whom this stroke is fallen, and why should not we prepare ourselves also for this condition? † It may be some of you think that you shall shift well enough, and though the robbers, and spoilers, and plunderers come, yet you are friends to them, they have your names and money underhand, and you have such and such a friend with them that will make your peace. But in this war that is now a foot, either you have to deal with God or else you have not; if not, then are you Atheists, for is there evil in

* Sed filiis Dei qui se agnoscant mundi hæredes exulare non adeo durum est re ipsa quoque assuefieri ut peregrini discant esse in terra, utile est. Calvin, exul. Anglicanis.

* Cum advenis nuper receptaculum esset Anglica, dominus vos in tempore illorum exemplo premonuit ne vobis molestum foret easdem obire vices Calvini literæ, piis et doctis Angliæ exulabus. Humfred. de vita Juelli, page 91.

the city, and God hath done it? if you do deal with him, he hath said that in such a time of public calamity as this, he will light up a candle to search out those that are settled upon their lees, and he tells you expressly who those are, even such as say, God will do neither good nor evil, Zeph. i., that is, not to them: and whom will you now believe, your own hearts, and friends, that speak peace unto you, or that God in whose hand this sword is? Mr. Foxe in the Book of Martyrs tells us, that when the persecution was greatly in France, by the papists against the protestants, insomuch as the popish army were far raging up and down, some of the papists themselves were glad to send their children even to the houses of protestants that dwelt in other places, fearing the violence of their own soldiers: and why may not the sword of those that you think are on your own side knock at your door? but what if a foreigner come into the kingdom? what greater invitation can there be than this wasting and wracking of one another? and if a foreigner should land, why not as likely in these parts as any other? considering the great evils that we above others are guilty of, and how the popish pollutions did first set in this country when England went astray: why should we not fear that God may have some intention to reserve the foreigner for us, the last and bitterest part of the cup? and will a foreigner know the language of your entreaty more than your neighbours? will not his hand find out the riches of the people, one as well as another? will his sword make a difference between you and your neighbour? I am sure you that have made a combination, and said a confederacy with them that have said a confederacy, are more fully under the threatening than others, and if the sword come with a commission from God's threatening, as it doth, it will find you out as well as your neighbour: oh, therefore, who would not labour in some measure to be prepared for that condition? One and another, I beseech you, in Christ labour, labour all to be prepared for this estate.

Fourthly, What shall we do, that if it shall please the Lord to drive us out of our houses and habitations as well as our brethren, we may both prepare for it, and so carry the matter, as we may be patiently and sweetly supported in that estate?

By way of preparation, for the present before that condition come, and the Lord grant it may never come, be sure of this that you make good your interest in God himself, clear up your evidence for heaven, your assurance of God in Christ; when David was driven from home and harbour, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God; his God, *tolle meum et tolle deum*, saith Augustine, take away that word *my*, and take away *God*. If a man knows that God is his in Christ, his friend, his God, his habitation, unto whom he may continually resort, he will soon relieve himself thus: Well, though I have lost my house, yet I have kept my God, he is such a habitation as cannot be plundered, such a habitation as wind, and rain, and weather cannot beat through, such a habitation as I may carry up and down the world with me. Be sure of this therefore, that you clear up your interest in God himself.

Learn now before the rainy day come to be dead unto all the world. The man that is dying is senseless, not affected with the cries of his children, wife, and friends, that stand round about him, though they weep and wring their hands, he is not stirred, why? because being a dying man he is dead to them; and if you be dead to your houses, liberties and estates aforehand, you will be able to buckle, and grapple with that condition: so it was with Paul who died daily.

Be sure of this also, that you take heed now of all those things that may make your condition uncomfortable then. There are three things that will make that condition very uncomfortable: pride, wanton abuse of your creature-comforts, and unwillingness to lay them out in the case of God. If you have house, lands, estates, friends or good clothes, and be proud thereof, when they are taken away from you, your heart will smite you and say, Ah this was because I was so proud thereof, and lifted up myself above my brethren, and therefore now I am made even with them, as poor as they. If you do wantonly abuse the creature in drunkenness, chambering, wantonness &c., when they are taken away, your heart will upbraid you and say, Ah, this you may thank your wantonness for, you used the creatures so basely that they groaned under your hand, and so now they are gotten from you. If you be unwilling to lay them out in any good case, your heart will reproach you in the evil day and say, Ah, it is even just with God to take away all from me, I would not lay out

my money and estate for his truth, his ordinances, his cases, and now he hath given me, and all into the hands of spoilers. We read of David that he was twice thrust out from his home, once by his father in law Saul, and once by Absalom his son; when he was thrust out by Saul, though driven into a wilderness, we do not read, as I remember, that he wept; Saul the persecutor wept, but not David the persecuted: but when he was driven out by Absalom, he went barefoot, and wept, he wept and he went, and he went and he wept, why so? oh, that was the punishment of his sin, God had threatened that the sword should never depart from his house and now that threatening did seize upon him. Take heed therefore that this evil may not be the fruit of your sin, and do nothing now that may make your condition uncomfortable then; and because these three things will do it, take heed of them I pray you in the Lord.

But in case this evil feared should come, and who knows how soon it may? then some things are to be practised, and some things considered.

By way of practice. If it pleased the Lord to bring you or me or any of us into this sad condition, first humble yourselves, accept of the punishment of your iniquity, kiss the rod, and say, the Lord is righteous in all that is come upon you; so did Daniel, Dan. ix. 6., "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day," &c., so must we do, saying, As for me I confess indeed I deserved this long ago, for I did not pity those enough that were driven from their houses and habitations; I would not part with my house, and liberty, and estate for the truth, and give them up as a sacrifice unto the gospel, and now it is just, all should be taken from me; the Lord is righteous, the Lord is righteous.

Then be sure you bless and praise the Lord for that little that you have left; and if nothing be left, praise God for others that are free from your condition. If a man be in prosperity, and grieve for others in adversity, it is the only way to keep him in prosperity; if a man be in adversity, and can praise God for others and rejoice in their prosperity, it is the only way to have his own adversity changed into prosperity. A man is never so low but he hath somewhat left to

praise God for; so did Job, and so saith the apostle, "Be in all things thankful;" not in some conditions, but in all.

If ever you be brought into this estate, be sure that you keep God's promise in your full view. The promise is very full and clear; what condition is there enriched with more promises? Are you afraid when you are driven out of your houses, that you shall faint and fall in the streets, that you shall die in the fields, or some ditch? Remember that promise where God hath said; "Those that forsake house and land shall receive an hundred fold:" then remember the hundred fold promise. But would you return to your own house; and are you afraid that you shall not do so? then remember that promise; Micah iv. 6, 7., "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted." In the interim are you afraid of misery, poverty, beggary? then remember that promise which hath five seals upon it, "I will never leave you nor forsake you;" Heb. i. 3. 5; Joshua i. 5.; where in the original there are five negatives, as if he should say thus, "I will never, never, never, never, never leave you nor forsake you." Luther insists much upon that promise of our Saviour Christ unto his disciples: "You shall not have gone over all the cities of Judea until the Son of man shall come." The Son of Man was already come, saith Luther, when he did speak these words, and therefore the promise belongs not only to the disciples, but to all the disciples of Jesus Christ that shall be; the promise speaking thus much that though they be persecuted and driven from one place to another: yet there shall be always some place open to receive them; when persecution is one place, another shall be free from it; and there shall be always some place free, until the Son of Man shall come. Stock and store yourselves with many suitable promises, and when this misery spoken of shall come, keep them in your full view. These things are to be practised.

Again, By way of consideration. Though such a condition as this be exceeding sad and very lamentable, yet consider this, that it is not any new thing that doth befal you, but such as befals the saints and best of God's servants. This sometimes bears the breadth of a great temptation, that my condition is like to none; and it may be you will think, Oh,

never any was in such a condition as I; what, driven from my houses and from my friends? Yes, Abraham; yes, Jacob; yes, Joseph; yes, David; yes, Daniel; yes, John, And Luther saith, as usually he doth speak boldly, This is the common chance and fortune of the gospel.* The very land of Canaan, the place of God's people is called by such a term as doth signify a land of beauty or comeliness, and a land of hinds,* or roes, or harts, that are swift in going, and of a flying nature, to shew, say some, that when God's people are in the most beautiful state, it is but a flying, moving state, &c. Yet when they are so, they are notwithstanding a delight unto God himself. Think, therefore, with yourself, There is no new thing befallen me.

Consider the way that God takes ordinarily to bring his people to mercy. He seldom brings them to any mercy but he brings them about by the way of the contrary misery. If he intends to give them a sure peace, he will bring them about unto it by the way of war; so he brought Israel to Canaan, the land of rest, through much war. If he brings them to riches, he will bring them about by the way of poverty, as with Job. If he intends a kingdom to them, he will bring them by a wilderness, as with David. If a sure habitation, he will suffer a man to be driven from his habitation.* And therefore when you are driven from your's, despair not, but say, Ah, this is God's way, now am I in God's way to a sure habitation.

Consider seriously with yourselves what that is which you leave, what the cause is that you do leave it for, and who it is you do leave it with: you leave your house, your habitation, your land, your riches, which shortly would leave you, whose wings are like the wings of an eagle, strong to fly away; you leave it for your God, your country, your religion. And is that lost which you do lose for truth? Is there any loss in losing for Jesus Christ? And with him you leave it, who is a faithful paymaster, and will pay you forbearance money

* Hic mos hæc fortuna evangelii.—Luther in Ezek. xx. 6.

† Hic enim צבי usurpatur sæpius existimo spiritum consulto vocabulum hoc adhibuisse quo complecteretur utrumque de pulsionem et fælicitatem ne desponderent ejus cives animos sed in media sua tristissima abdicatione se esse Deo צבי cordi et deliciis.—Brightman in Dan. p. 22.

* Si enim non impense te deligeret Deus non ita tecum luderet hoc est non differet neque in contrarium disponeret suam promissionem et auxilium.—Luther.

also. Did he not pay Ruth well all that ever she did leave for him; mark but that one example of Naomi and Ruth: Naomi being in Israel, where the ordinances were, and there coming a time of famine, she left all to go into the land of Moab, and the text tells us (Ruth i.) she went for bread. If you inquire what became of her, you shall find she returns empty, bitter: "Call me not Naomi, call me bitter, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." Her daughter Ruth, on the contrary left her country, Moab, to go to the place of God's ordinances; and when she came into Israel she was so poor, at the first, that she was fain to glean for her living, yet contented; and after a while the Lord provided a husband for her, the richest man in all the country, Boaz. The moral of this example is this: those that will leave the ordinances and way of God's true worship for bread, shall return home empty and full of bitterness; yea, though they be good people: but those that will leave their own places and habitations and friends to go unto the place of God's ordinance, though they be put to a gleaning condition at first, yet the Lord, in his providence, in his due time, will make them exceeding rich and very wealthy. Consider, therefore, when you are in this estate, what is that you leave, why, and with whom you leave it, even with Ruth's paymaster, who is as good a paymaster now as he was to Ruth.

If you would have comfort and supportance in that condition, consider seriously and much how God hath dealt with his people that have been thus served and used. And if you look into Scripture, you shall find that he still hath provided for them, given them favour in the places where they have come, and brought them back again from those places into which they have been scattered. He hath provided for them. Did not God provide for Jacob when he was driven out of his father's house by his rough brother Esau? Says Jacob, "I passed over this brook with this staff and rod, and now I am returned with two bands." When at the first he went out and took up his lodging in the cold fields the first night, lying upon a stone for his pillow, as the Scripture speaks, there the Lord appeared to him in a vision, and shewed him a ladder, with angels ascending and descending upon it, which is interpreted by Christ to be Christ himself, in John i. 51. And so if it should ever be your portion to be driven out by

your rough brethren Esaus, though you lie in the cold fields, God will there shew you this ladder. It is observed that our Saviour Christ sent out his disciples twice; the first time he commands them to take no money, nor sword, nor scrip, and then, upon account, they said they wanted nothing: afterward he sent them out again, and said unto them, "Now let him that hath a sword take it, and he that hath a coat take it;" then they met with more suffering than we read of before, teaching thus much, that God will then more fully provide for his people when they are purseless, scripless, swordless, and in the most shiftless condition. Besides, the Lord gave them favour in the eyes of the people in the places where they came. Had not Abraham favour, and Joseph favour, and Moses favour? David favour in the eyes of the king of Achish, Nehemiah favour, Ezra favour, and others of his people favour in the places into which they were driven? And if you look into the xxxivth of Ezekiel, you shall find that when God's people were by the proud prelates of those times abused, the Lord promised to gather them from those places into which they were scattered. First he complaineth of the proud prelates that they would not gather them: verse 4, "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost, but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." Then he promiseth that he would do it himself: verse 13, "I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers," &c. This he did, this he doth, this he will do. If my people would but think of these things, they would never stick with God for their houses and liberties when the profession of his truth doth call for them. Think of it, therefore, seriously, it will be exceeding helpful to you now, and comfortable then. In such a condition God hath always provided for his people, given them favour, and in due time gathered them to their own place again; and he is the same God now that ever he was.

If you would have comfort and be supported in that estate, put yourselves often to these disjunctions. Either I am one

of God's family and household servants or not; if not, why do I not mourn rather that I am none of God's house, than that I have lost mine own house? and if I be, will not God provide for his own family? Men provide for their families, God will much more. Again, thus, either God doth take care of a man or woman in this condition or not; if not, what mean those frequent charges in Scripture upon men to pity, to respect, to care for, to entertain the stranger? and if God do take care, and that by promise, why should not I believe it, go away, and be very quiet? Again, thus, either there is grace in me or not; if not, why do I not rather mourn for want of grace than want of house; for want of Christ than the want of liberty: if there be grace in me, surely it is not in the power of men to make me miserable. Seneca, though a heathen, speaks divinely to this purpose: A man's country is wherever he is well, but that whereby he is well is not in the place but in the man.* The whole world is a christian's country. And says another author: The blood of Christ knows no nations;† all are alike to him. Indeed when the child or boy hath gotten a long pole, he thinks to go up to the top of such a mountain and there to touch the heavens; and when he comes there, he sees he is never the nearer; then he thinks to run to the top of the next mountain, and then he will touch them surely, but when he comes there he is as far distant as before: so men think to get such and such a mountainous estate, and when they are at the top of that mountain they shall touch the heavens, or when they are in such and such a place they shall be nearer heaven; but heaven may be as near one place as another. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." The prophet doth not say that England is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; London is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; Norfolk is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; Yorkshire is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; no, but he saith, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

Chrysostom ‡ speaks excellently to this argument, who, being to be banished, in his parting sermon to his people, saith

* Patria est ubicunque bene est illud cunctam per quod bene est in homine non in loco est.—Seneca.

† Sanguis Christi non novit rationes.

‡ Chrysostom de exilio illius, tom iv.

thus: What should I fear? Shall I fear death?—"To me to live is Christ, to die is gain." Shall I fear banishment?—"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Shall I fear the loss of mine estate?—"I brought nothing into this world, neither can I carry any thing out of it." Shall I fear poverty?—I never desired to be rich. Shall I fear the misery and wasting and spoiling of the churches, part whereof I am now to leave?—The church is greater, saith he, than heaven and earth. Christ never said, the gates of hell should not prevail against the heavens or the earth, as he hath said for the churches. Christ never took upon him the body of the heavens as he hath done of the church's. The church, it is the ship wherein Christ is; and though the waves arise, and storms beat, they shall never be able to sink the ship, yea, though Christ himself doth seem to sleep. Often, often therefore, my beloved, put thyself unto this disjunction: Either I am in the ship with Christ or else I am not; he in me and I in him, or else not: if not, why do I not rather mourn that I am not in Christ than that I am not in my house? and if I be in him, surely he will be exceeding careful and very tender. Oh that men and women would but think of these things, surely they would be quiet, patient, if not joyful in that condition. Think of them, therefore, and lay them up by you.

But I shall never be able to bear this affliction. What, to be driven from my house! If I meet with any cross now in my family, I cannot bear it, how shall I be able to be thrust and driven out of all, and that with patience?

You do not know what you shall be able to do in that condition. Seneca tells us a story of one Marcellus, that being in banishment behaved himself so virtuously, that when a man was to part from him, he that parted from this banished man would rather count himself unhappy and the banished man, than he that was indeed so.* *Dabitur in hora*, God giveth more grace if need be, saith the apostle.

But when you know that parents bear with their childrens' frowardness in weaning times; and though they cry, and are more froward than ordinary, yet the parent excuseth it, and says, It is weaning time, it is weaning time. Now if God

* Quantus ille vir fuit qui efficit et aliquis exul sibi videretur quod ab exule recedebat.—Seneca.

calls you to lose your houses and liberties, that is your weaning time; and though there be some frowardness more than ordinary, yet your God and Father will bear with it: yet be humbled for it, for it is your weaning time.

Oh, but that time when a man is driven from house and habitation, is a time wherein a man is exposed to great temptations; exposed to poverty, to reproach, many miseries and sad temptations; and I shall never be able to stand out those.

True, that time indeed is exposed to sad temptations. And we read of David, that when he came to the king of Achish, he changed his behaviour, and let fall his spittle upon his beard. Take heed that you do not see some that are good people, before such a condition as this come, when they are thus tried, do change their behaviour, and their spittle falls on their beards. Oh, take heed that you do not change your behaviour in this condition; which, that you may not do, fear, fear always. Fear is the keeper of innocency.* He is to be feared most, that doth fear least; and he is to be feared least, that doth fear most.

Oh, but I am afraid my children, my charge, should miscarry in that condition.

I will tell you what Chrysostom † saith upon his return out of his banishment, wherein he compares the church that he had left unto Sarah in the hands of Pharaoh. Pharaoh, saith he, seeing Sarah to be a beautiful fair woman, desired her, Gen. xii.; she was fain to leave her husband, and her husband her. She was in the hands of Pharaoh; yet Pharaoh perceiving afterward that she was another man's wife, she returned again to her own husband untouched and chaste. So, saith he, though my charge hath been taken from me, and hath been as it were in the hands of Pharaoh; yet God hath preserved you untouched and chaste, you have watched though I have slept. Surely if God calls for our liberties, and scattereth us from our charge, he will keep our charge; if you keep the charge of God's house, he will keep the charge of your houses. Did not David preserve Mephibosheth, when the other sons of Saul were slain; and why Mephibosheth preserved, a lame and deformed man? but because there was entire love between Jonathan and David, and so for Jonathan's sake he did spare his son. And so if

* Timor innocentiæ custos est. † Chrysostom. tom iv.

there be any entire love between you and Jesus Christ, though your children and charge be Mephibosheths, that even grow awry, the Lord Jesus Christ will take care of them and preserve them. If you can say that there is as much love in your heart towards Christ, as there was in Jonathan towards David; I can say, that there shall be as much care in Christ towards your children and posterity and charge, as there was in David towards Jonathan's. Wherefore, my beloved, either you do trust God with your souls for your eternal mansions, or you do not: if you do not, why say you that you do trust God for your eternities, and for your souls? and if you do trust God with your souls for an eternal mansion, why should you not trust him with your children for a temporal mansion? Certainly, if God's charge be your charge, your charge shall be his charge; and being so, you have his bond that they shall never want their daily bread. Wherefore think on all these things; think of them for the present, and in the future, if such a condition fall, and the Lord give us understanding in all things.

SERMON V.

THANKFULNESS REQUIRED IN EVERY CONDITION.

PREACHED AT ST. MARGARET'S, NEW FISH STREET, MARCH 23, 1645.

"*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*"—1 THESS. v. 18.

WHAT is written to the Thessalonians, is written for our instruction. What they are commanded as christians, we are commanded as christians.

In the latter part of this chapter, several exhortations were given to them. Among the rest this is one; in which ye have,

The exhortation itself: "In every thing give thanks."

And, the reason enforcing that exhortation: "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

"In every thing give thanks:" in prosperity and in adversity, whether things go well or whether they go ill; in every thing give thanks. He had said before, verses 16, 17, "Rejoice evermore, pray continually." Unto those exhortations he adds no such reason as here. Because it may seem strange that a man should give thanks in every thing, he adds also, "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." So that plainly here lies this observation, or truth, upon the words:

It is the will of God, even our Father, that we should be thankful to him in every thing.

When we are full, it will be granted that then we are to give thanks to God. Deut. viii. 10. But ye are not only to give thanks when ye are full, but when ye are empty; not only when ye are strong, but when ye are weak; not only when ye are delivered from the hands of your enemy, but when you are delivered into the hands of your enemy. Therefore Job says, i. 21., "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be his name." Job was plundered by the enemy, and yet he does bless the Lord; Job was emptied

of a full estate, and yet he does bless the Lord; Job had lost his dear children, and yet he does bless the Lord; Job was in a great measure given up into the hands of Satan, and yet he blesses the Lord: for which he is commended.

So then, it is our duty, and the will of God our Father, that we should not only be thankful, but we should be thankful in every thing.

For, there is always excellency enough in God and Christ, to entertain your thankfulness, to draw out your thankfulness and praises. Indeed, there is a formal or notional difference, between praising God, and giving thanks to God. Praises respect the excellencies of God himself; thankfulness respects the benefits we receive from God. I praise God, when I honour him for the excellency that is in him; I am thankful to God, when I bless him for those benefits I receive from him. But now in Scripture, these are put one for the other ordinarily: and whatsoever our condition be, whether high or low, rich or poor, full or empty, there is enough excellency in Christ for to draw out our praises: and therefore in every thing we are to be thankful.

There is no condition so sad, but somewhat is good that is mingled with it; no darkness so dark, but some light withal; no misery so miserable, but some mercy withal. Heaven is all mercy, and hell is all misery: but this life is made up of both, it is a twilight, some good in every condition; and therefore, in every thing we are to give thanks unto God.

It is the duty of a christian to be like unto Jesus Christ: he was thankful in every thing. When he had not whereon to lay his head, "Father, I thank thee," Matt. xi. 25. When he was to go to his agony, and sweat drops of blood; they sung a hymn, says the text, a psalm of praise. So, when a christian is to go to his agony: whatever agony he meets withal, there is rise enough yet for his thankfulness: in every thing be thankful. As the apostle hath it in Eph. v. 20, "Giving thanks always, for all things unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You will say, Suppose that a christian meet with some long, heavy, and sharp affliction: is he to be thankful then; to be thankful in that condition?

Yes; look I pray into Isa. xxiv. 15, "Wherefore," says he, "glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord

of Israel in the isles of the sea." Glorify ye the Lord in the fires; so ye read it. Some rather translate it thus: "Glorify ye the Lord in doctrines;" *Urim*, the same word that we translate, *Urim*, for the Urim and Thummim: but I would rather translate it *vallies*; so Calvin: for doctrines does not suit with that which follows: "Glorify ye the Lord in the vallies, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea." A valley is a low place, and dark; now, says he, though ye be in a dark condition, removed from light; Glorify the Lord in the vallies, glorify the Lord there. And good reason why the saints should do so; as ye will see, if ye will look into Zech. i. 8: "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle-trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white." This man upon a red horse plainly must be meant Christ: who is here attended with red horses, speckled and white, to send forth and dispatch into the several parts of the world upon his design. These other red horses, they are behind him, waiting upon him: now where is Christ? he is among the myrtle-trees: and where are the myrtle-trees? they are in the bottom. The saints and people of God for their fruitfulness they are called myrtle-trees, and sometimes their condition is as a valley; they are in the bottom; but yet they are myrtle-trees in the bottom, and Jesus Christ is among these myrtle-trees, though they be in a bottom, though they be in a valley; and therefore no wonder that we should praise, and glorify God in this condition. Beloved, what we may rejoice in, that we may praise God for. Now, says the apostle, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; and let the brother of high degree rejoice in that he is made low," James i. 9, 10: "Rejoice in tribulation," Rom. v. 3. A man is to rejoice more for the opportunity of exercising grace, than in all prosperity: there are some graces that cannot be exercised but in tribulation, cannot be exercised in heaven; patience, and the like. Now then, when tribulation comes, a christian should thus look upon it: I have hereby an opportunity of exercising that grace, that I had not before; and then he will bless God, and then he will be thankful in that condition: when God takes away one mercy, he gives another: if he take away Moses, he will give a Joshua: if he take away

Eli, he will give a Samuel: if he will take away Christ's personal presence, he will send the Holy Ghost. And the truth is, he does not so much take away as borrow a mercy; and he pays it again with usury and advantage: Onesimus goes away like a thief from Philemon, but he returns again with profit to him and others. As for these outward things, they will prove but debts at the great day of judgment: riches now, and gifts now, but debts then: and the less ye have of these outward things, the less ye have to reckon for them. In a bad day, men they say, Oh, that I had less, my reckoning would be less: the less ye have, the less your reckoning will be. The comfort of a man's life, consists not in *muchness*, but *fitness* to his heart. If a man have a great farm, and a small stock, it is the only way to break him: it is better to have a farm fit for one's stock, than a great farm. The Lord he sees what our stock of grace is, and accordingly he provides a farm for every one of his children; and sometimes it is lessened, but the reason is, because the stock of grace is no bigger, they have no more grace to stock it withal. Our gifts, and our parts, and our prosperity, they are so strong sometimes, that God is fain to mingle water therewithal, that we may not be drunk. I appeal to you: are not the saints gainers by all their losses; are not they strengthened by all their weakness; are not they bettered by all their crosses? Surely then, in all things they are to be thankful: though their affliction be exceeding long, sharp, and grievous; yet they are to be thankful in that condition.

But suppose now, that it be persecution that a man is to be exercised with; and that is bitter: is a christian to be thankful then, even in that condition?

Yes, ye know what the apostle says; "to you it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer," Phil. i. 29. God's gift is worth our thanks. And says the apostle, "All shall turn to the furtherance of the gospel," Phil. i. 22. Is it not a great matter, and worth our praise and thankfulness; that we should be trusted by God to bear witness to his truth? "For this came I into the world," says Christ, "that I might bear witness to the truth," John xviii. 37. It was his design; thereby ye are like to him, and so honour him. When were the churches and people of God more pure than under per-

secution? and is it not a great mercy to be kept pure? The more you suffer for any truth, the more that truth will be spread by you: you die, but the truth lives: your estate dies, and your name dies, and your liberty dies: but your dying estate gives a living testimony unto the truth. "When I am lifted up," says Christ, meaning upon the cross, "I will draw all men after me," John xii. 32. And so shall you do, when you are lift up upon the cross for any truth, ye shall draw all men after that truth that ye are lifted up for. When have ye more communion with Jesus Christ, than when ye suffer most for his truth? Is it not a great mercy for a man to be glorified on this side heaven? Pray look upon that expression which ye have in John xiii. 30, 31; it is said concerning Christ himself, that when Judas went out, having received the sop, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him, verse 30. Judas "having received the sop, went immediately out, and it was night: therefore when he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified." Judas went out to betray him, to bring him to the cross, a false brother was gone out. Now is the Son of man glorified, says he, not only because the cross was the way to glory; but the truth is, he was glorified upon the cross, there was a glory there. You may observe it; he did many miracles, and when he had done those miracles, he did not say then, Now is the Son of man glorified. He was transfigured; and he did not say upon his transfiguration, Now is the Son of man glorified: but now he comes to suffer, now he comes to the cross; Now, says he, is the Son of man glorified. And indeed, now is his love to poor sinners glorified. The apostle says, "He triumphed over all principalities and powers upon the cross," Col. ii. 15; and his love triumphs over all our sins, and our guilt, and our unworthiness: oh, then was free grace and love, when Christ was upon the cross! Now is the Son of man glorified. And so it shall be with you: when a false brother goes out to persecute you, to betray you, to bring you the cross; you may say so: Now is the servant of the Lord glorified, now is my love to Christ glorified; never more glorified than now. This makes the apostle Peter speak in his 1st Epist. iv. 16: "If any man suffer as a christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf." It is matter of praise, and

thanksgiving here: says he, at verse 13, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." Verse 14, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you." That is, says one upon that place, as Noah's dove hovered over the water, and found no place for to rest her foot upon, until she returned to the ark: so does the Spirit of God, as it were, hover over the souls of men, it wanteth rest: and when it sees a soul that suffers for the truth, there it lights, there it rests, there the Spirit of God and of glory rests. I appeal to you: which will be most comfortable, think ye, at the day of judgment; that ye have been persecuted for the truth, or that ye have been a persecutor of the truth? I know your answer; when a christian is under persecution, he may lift up his voice, and say, I might have engaged against the truth; ah! I might have been a persecutor of the truth; but blessed be God it is not so. The apostles went away rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. Surely therefore, there is matter of praise and thanksgiving, even in this condition also, in this condition a christian should be thankful: it is the will of God our Father we should be thankful here.

But suppose that a man's inward and spiritual condition be overclouded, and God withdraw, and hide his face from a christian: shall he, can he be thankful in this condition? is it his duty to be thankful now?

Yes; for though God do withdraw, though he do hide his face, and not shine upon a christian; yet it may be light with him. Day may be day though the sun do not shine forth in bright beams. And it may be day light, it may be day upon a christian soul, though there be never a beam shines. We are saved by faith, and not by feeling.

Again, Though Christ doth hide his face, though he doth withdraw his comforting presence, he never withdraws his supporting presence from a christian; sometimes more of that, when least of the other. Christ deals by a christian as God dealt by Christ in his agony, and on the cross: though God withdrew his comforting presence, so as he cried out and said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 46, yet he had never more of God's supporting presence: and so it is with a christian. Though

Christ may withdraw his comforting presence, yet he never withdraws his supporting presence from them.

Besides, Jesus Christ does so withdraw from a christian as he does draw withal by his Spirit. He seemed to withdraw from the Canaanitish woman, but he did draw her to him by his Spirit. When he withdraws in Cant. v. from his spouse, he leaves myrrh upon the ringles of the door. And so when he withdraws from a christian, he leaves his myrrh upon the ringles of the heart: the heart cannot be quiet, cannot rest, takes no contentment without him, he does draw the soul to him, while he seems to withdraw from the soul.

What a man would not lose for all the world, that, you will say, is worthy of praise and thankfulness. Now take a gracious soul, a godly man when he is most deserted, forsaken, left, as it were; and he says, Now mercy is gone, now Christ is gone: ask him but this question: If Christ be gone, as you say, why do not you renounce Christ, and renounce all his ways? He will tell you, Oh, no, I dare not renounce him for all the world. But if he be quite gone, why do not you turn drunkard; why do not you turn swearer: and why do not you cast off all duties? Oh, no, that I dare not: I have yet something left, that I would not lose for all the world. Is there not then matter of praise and thanksgiving in this condition? Surely there is, even in this condition also.

But you will say: Suppose that a man be oppressed with sad temptations, black and dark temptations; God does not only withdraw, but Satan draws near, heavy, and dreadful temptations press in upon him: is it the will of God the Father, that he should be thankful in this condition also?

Yes; for is it not matter of praise, think ye, and thankfulness, that your enemy is overcome before you strike a stroke? you shall be more than conquerors: write, your enemy overcome before you fight. "Be of good comfort," says Christ, "I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33; and so the god of the world, Satan, your enemy, is overcome before you do strike a stroke.

Besides, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that Satan can tempt you no more than your own Father gives him leave to do? "Simon, Simon, (says Christ,) Satan hath desired thee, that he may winnow thee as wheat," Luke

xxiii. 31. Mark the words, "He hath desired:" he was fain to ask leave first, he could not winnow Peter until he had leave. And he could not winnow Job until he had leave; he hath not power to tempt you further than your own Father gives him leave.

Again, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that nothing hath befallen you but what hath befallen the best of God's children, the greatest saints? Men say sometimes, Oh, never any one's condition like to mine, never any affliction like to mine. The most godly men have been most sorely tempted. In the Old Testament, David, a man after God's own heart, it is said of him, "The devil stood up, and moved him to number the people," 1 Chron. xxi. 1. What a report did God give of Job, and you know his winnowing and his continuance. In the New Testament, two famous apostles, Paul and Peter. "Peter, Satan hath desired to winnow thee:" Paul, "a messenger Satan, sent to buffet him." And our Lord Jesus Christ himself, "in all things tempted, that he might succour those that are tempted," Heb. ii. 18. Oh, beloved, how gracious will Jesus Christ be to tempted ones, that came from heaven on purpose to be gracious to them.

Further, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that you have always one for to run unto, to succour you, to relieve you in your temptations? A brazen serpent up, against you be stung. Paul therefore, in Rom. vii., having said, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" in the next words says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." When Satan is tempting, Christ is praying, interceding. "Satan hath desired to winnow thee, (says he,) but I have prayed," Luke xxii. 31. You cannot pray: truly sometimes we pray most, when we pray least, for Christ prays for us.

Again, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that ye have such an estate that these thieves can never rob you of? A christian is a traveller; the thief meets him, and takes his money that he hath about him; but he hath an inheritance of land at home, which the thief cannot take away from him. And Satan by his temptations possibly may rob you of these comforts that are about you; but you have an inheritance

and estate, christian, in heaven, that shall never be taken away, that you shall never be robbed of.

I will conclude thus, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that by this mud you shall be more cleansed. Beloved, this is Christ's way: he suffers men to be tempted, that they may be freed from more temptations, and he suffers this dirt to be cast upon them, that they may be the more cleansed. "Simon, Simon, (says our Saviour,) Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat." How so? Satan "goes up and down like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." True, that is his intent in his temptations; Satan's intent in the temptation, is not to winnow, that is Christ's intent. Satan's intent in the temptation is to devour, but Jesus Christ's intent in all those temptations is to winnow. And who more knowing, who more gracious, who more humble, who more thankful than those that have been most assaulted with a temptation? Pray observe what is said in 2 Cor. xii. 7. Says Paul, "Lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger Satan, (so it may be read, without *of*, the messenger Satan,) to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure," again. See how that goes before and follows: it begins the verse and ends the verse: "Lest I should be exalted above measure," at the beginning of the verse; "Lest I should be exalted above measure," at the latter end of the verse. As if now, that these temptations were special preservations against spiritual pride; it is set down twice, "Lest I should be exalted above measure;" again and again. Spiritual pride indeed is very dangerous. It was Mr. Fox's speech, As I get good by my sins, so I get hurt by my graces: in regard of that spiritual pride he was guilty of upon the receipt of them. By temptation God uses to keep men humble. The Hebrew word for lees, the lees of wine, comes from the root that signifies, to keep, because the wines are kept by the lees. And so God is pleased to keep men humble by these temptations; in these lees, and in these dregs, God keeps men's graces. Temptations do you no hurt, until ye yield to them. The greater the temptation, and the more your flesh does tremble at it, the greater the affliction, but the lesser the sin. Temptation is the soul's rape; it may

deflower your soul, offer violence to your soul: it cannot take away your innocency. Now, is it not a great mercy to be kept innocent and chaste unto Jesus Christ? Austin hath a notable speech: If ye praise God under good things, ye are paid your debt; if ye praise God under evil, ye have made God your debtor. The truth is, we can never pay our debt to God, neither are we able to make God our debtor; but God is pleased to call himself so: when men praise him under temptations, and under persecutions, and under desertions, God is pleased to call himself our debtor. Surely therefore, it is good for a christian to bless God, and to praise God in every thing; in all things to be thankful; in affliction, in persecution, in desertion, under temptation. This is the will of God our Father, that we should be thankful to him in every thing, in every condition.

And if so, then what great cause have we to be very thankful to God in these times. Had the Lord let in the enemy upon you, ye should have been thankful: had ye been plundered of all your estates, ye must have been thankful: had ye lien at the mercy of the merciless enemy crying for quarter; yet you must have been thankful: how much more now? Had ye been emptied of all ye must have been thankful. Oh, shall we not be thankful then unto God now, that hath given us such deliverance, and such victories as these?

You will say unto me; what special thing is there that we should be thankful unto God for in these times?

Hath the Lord done such great things for England, and art thou only a stranger in Israel? Did ever England hear of such a year as this last year hath been? Can any records tell us of such a year? May I not say, stand out, O all ye ancient records from your dust, and tell us from the first day of England's birth, did ever England see such a year as this hath been, wherein the power and mercy, and free grace of God hath rode in triumph throughout the kingdom?

Yet that I may not be wanting to you, to your question: look I pray into Psalm cvii. 1, 2., ye shall find it written: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord say so; whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." See who are to say so: "let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." Be-

loved ye know that not long since we were in captivity: I mean a spiritual captivity: we sat down by the waters' side, and said, How shall we do to sing a christian song? The Lord hath redeemed us, he hath redeemed us out of the hand of our enemies. And if the Lord hath not redeemed you out of the hand of your enemy: do not say so: but if he have, let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

Besides, Is it not worth our thankfulness, that we have had so many days of thanksgiving together? A day of fasting and prayer, is a sweet day; a thanksgiving day sweeter, if I may make compare: for in a day of fasting and prayer, we deal with the anger and wrath and displeasure of God: in a day of thanksgiving with the love of God, and the mercy of God. In a day of fasting and prayer, we exercise grief: but in a day of thanksgiving, we exercise joy and love; in a day of fasting and prayer, your eye is upon your sins; in a day of thanksgiving, upon your graces, to be thankful for them. As the fish swims upon the top of the water when the sun shines, which in a storm lay at the bottom: and wood, and sticks tumbled up and down, and those were seen. So in a day of thanksgiving, there ye see and take notice of your own graces, to be thankful for them. In a day of fasting and prayer, sometimes, ye are so humbled for sin committed, as the sense of your justification is quite shattered: but in the day of thanksgiving, your assurance for heaven is sealed: they are sweet days. And, beloved, you have had many of them of late; and surely this is worth our praise.

But give me leave a little to enumerate: for enumeration is one kind of argument: hath not the Lord from heaven owned his own cause in the hands of his servants, our brethren in the field? Hath not the Lord heard your prayers? Hath not the Lord opened many mines of precious truths that ye never knew before? Hath not the Lord delivered you from the hand of a savage enemy? Those that lay among the pots, brought forth with doves' wings: victory after victory; one treading upon the heel of another, overtaking one another? Does he not daily load you with his benefits? I cannot say as David in Psalm ix. 1., "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will shew forth all thy marvellous works." The former part, "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart," you will say, but the latter

part, " I will shew forth all thy marvellous works ;" who can say ? they are beyond us.

And now, beloved, if it be our duty to praise God, to be thankful to him in every condition, when we are low : shall we not be thankful to him now, that the Lord hath raised us, and filled us thus ?

You will say, there is one thing that hinders us in the work of praise and thanksgiving in these times : a reformation is now begun, and things do not succeed according to our desires in the matter of reformation : should we, can we be thankful now ?

Yes ; if the Lord give me a child, should not I be thankful for it, because it is not born a man ? When the Jews built the temple, did not they shout, and praise God that the foundation was laid ? When the Israelites had overcome their enemies, in Samuel's time ; though the enemies were round about them, they set up a stone, and called it Ebenezer, " Hitherto the Lord hath helped us," 1 Sam. vii. 12. Beloved, in our thanksgiving we are to be like unto Jesus Christ : he did not only praise God when he had the mercy, but before he had it, in the entrance upon it. When he raises up Lazarus from the dead : " Father (says he) I thank thee that thou hearest me always :" John xi. 41, 42. and then he commands Lazarus to come out. But first he gives thanks to God. In the Scripture, the Holy Ghost hath commanded us, " to honour the Lord with our substance ; and with the first fruits of all our increase." Prov. iii. 9. Either ye have the first-fruits of reformation or not. If not, what mean all those precious ears and fruits which ye have been gathering in these latter times ? And if ye have the first fruits, though ye have not reaped the harvest yet : then " honour the Lord with your substance, and with your first fruits ; so shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses with the new wine of the gospel." God does give one mercy as a seal unto another ; a first as a seal to the second : the second as a seal to the third : the lesser as a pledge of the greater. God does give a lesser mercy to try us whether we will be thankful, that he may give a greater. Beloved, these are trying times, God tries us whether we will be thankful for what we have. A reformation is now on foot : what though things do not suc-

ceed according to your desire, shall we not be thankful for what we have, because we want something of what we would have? when then shall we thankful?

Aye, but it is not only want of reformation, but many errors that are risen up among us in these times: and should we be thankful now in this condition?

Yes, shall I not be thankful for some grace, because it is mingled with much corruption; shall I not be thankful for my field of corn, because divers weeds are mingled therewith; shall I cast away the kernel, because it is compassed about with a shell? Luther, in the beginning of the reformation, met with many errors, and he comforted himself with this; When the corn is grown, the weeds will die alone. Meaning this; when reformation is come to greater strength, errors would die alone. It is said of our Lord and Saviour Christ, "He was numbered among transgressors:" Isa. liii. 12. Should not I love Christ, or own Christ, or be thankful for Christ; because he was numbered among transgressors? The errors of the time, you say, are the transgressors of the time. Shall I not love the truth, and own the truth, and be thankful for the truth because it is numbered among the transgressors, the transgressors of the time? Blessed is the man that can see a beauty in truth when it hath a scratched face. And indeed every truth hath a beauty; and the Lord hath given you out many truths in these times that ye were ignorant of before. Beloved, I do not say that ye should be thankful for any error, we ought to be grieved for any error. But shall we be so mindful against error, crying out against error, error; as not to be thankful for any truth we have? If the whole world were spread with error; that one truth living: "Jesus Christ died for sinners;" there were matter of praise. The more error does prevail, the more mercy it is, that you are kept. And truly the only way, or a special way to be kept from error, is to be thankful for truth. As a way to be kept from sin, is to be thankful for grace: so a special way to be kept from error is to be thankful for truth. So then, notwithstanding all this; yet you are to be thankful: thankful even in this condition, though many errors, yet ye are to be thankful, to be in all things thankful, in every thing thankful. Thankful when ye are straitened, as well as when ye are most enlarged. Thankful when ye

are deserted, as well as when God shines upon you. Thankful when ye are afflicted, as well as when ye are delivered. Thankful when ye have no victories, as well as when ye have victories. Some, it may be, now will praise the Lord and be thankful; hearing of so many victories; and because there may be some hopes of peace: but beloved, it is our duty to be in every thing thankful: it is the will of God our Father, that we should be thankful in every thing, thankful in every condition.

Give me leave to propound some few encouragements hereunto: for it seems a hard thing to be thankful in every thing, in every condition.

If you can be thankful in every thing, even when ye are low, you will engage God for to raise you up: if when you are weak, you engage God for to make you strong: if when you are deserted, you engage God to enlarge you, to shine upon you. It pleases God much, you cannot please him more, than to be thankful in every thing, even when ye are low. For example, suppose a man be convinced of sin, troubled in conscience, hath no assurance of God's love in Christ; if he should die, he does not know whether he shall go to heaven or hell. Yet notwithstanding, says he, whatever become of me, I bless the Lord that I am come hither: I was going on in the most sad condition: the Lord hath opened my eyes, I see indeed nothing but the wrath of God, due for my sins; but yet blessed be the Lord, that hath opened my eyes to see this: Aye, says the Lord, dost thou bless me because I have opened thy eyes for to see thy sins? I will open thine eyes for to see thy Saviour. Dost thou bless me because I have opened thy eyes to see thy own heart, and the naughtiness thereof? I will open thy eyes to see all my grace, and I will cause all my grace to pass before thee. This engages God, when we can be thankful for every thing; and when ye are low, it engages God much unto you.

Again, Hereby your afflictions shall be made blessings unto you. You say, How shall I know whether an affliction be a blessing or no? Take this note: when thou canst bless God under an affliction, then thy affliction is made a blessing: thy very blessing of God under an affliction, makes thy affliction a blessing to thee. Job, was greatly afflicted, and he

blessed God and his affliction was a blessing to him: so shall it be with you. Touch but thy affliction with a thankful heart, it will turn it into gold.

Moreover, the more you can be thankful for any thing when ye are low; the more peace shall your heart and your soul be filled with. Some of you, it may be, want peace of conscience; and ye say: Oh, that I had peace within, whatever become of me outwardly: whatsoever the world do with me, oh, that I had peace within.

To this purpose consider Phil. iv.; says the apostle: "Be ye in nothing careful," verse 6, "but in every thing, by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving; let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This is the way to get a great, and a full peace. Be in nothing careful: be in all things thankful, then the peace of God shall guard you.

Besides, hereby ye shall shame the devil: your great adversary shall retreat from tempting of you, as one ashamed and confounded. Some there are that shame the saints: and are a shame to the ways of God, and to the gospel: some there are that shame the devil. The devil said unto God concerning Job, "Do but touch him, and he will curse thee to thy face." Job i. 11. Says the Lord, "He is in thy hand, only save his life:" and Satan touched him: what then? "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away; blessed be his name." The devil said he would curse God, and he blesses God: see how the devil is shamed and confounded here. Some there are that make the devil's words good: "Touch him, and he will curse thee to thy face:" and so do some do, and thereby they are a shame indeed unto the people of God, and the ways of God. But when people can bless God under affliction: if ye in every thing be thankful; the devil is confounded, God is much honoured. Wherefore, beloved, as ye desire that God may be much honoured by you, the devil confounded, your own peace settled, all your afflictions turned into blessings, and the Lord engaged to you, to raise you up when ye are low: learn out this lesson, not only to be thankful when ye are full, but to be thankful when ye are empty, to be in every thing thankful, this is the will of God your Father.

How shall we do this, you will say, how must that be done?

Some few things in answer to that, and so I will wind up up all.

Observe your own temper, and accommodate yourselves; put thyself upon that duty, and that grace, which thine own disposition lies next unto. God hath given us this indulgence. "Is any afflicted? let him pray: is any merry? let him sing psalms." According to your disposition, says he, that is the meaning; so let your work be, so let your grace be. It may be thou canst not pray; by that time thou hast been at another duty that thy disposition lies more unto, next unto, thou wilt be fit to pray. It may be thou canst not sing; by that time thou hast been at prayer, which thy disposition lies next unto, thou wilt be fit to sing. Let us not be more cruel to our souls than God is; he hath given us this indulgence: observe yourselves, accommodate yourselves; and by this means you shall be able upon all occasions to bless and praise the Lord.

Again, Be sure of this, that you maintain your assurance fresh, and green. It is a hard thing for a man to be thankful in every thing that wants assurance; come to him for to praise God for a great work: but it may be, said he, it came in judgment to me, I have no assurance. Strengthen your assurance in these three things, and it will cause continual thankfulness, thankfulness in every thing: assurance of your interest in Christ, and union with him: assurance that all comes from love: assurance that all things work together for your good: and then if the Tempter come, and says, Wilt thou praise the Lord; dost thou not see how all thy acquaintance hath left thee; and all thy friends left thee? you will answer again, Aye, but all this is for my good, and all this comes out of love, and so whatever falls out, you will be thankful in every thing.

Desire not much: he that desires much, will expect much; and he that expects much, he will not be content with little, much less thankful for every thing. Jacob was a plain hearted man; he desired little, he was content with less, he was thankful for every thing. So must you be.

And if you do desire much, let your eye be as much upon what ye have, as upon what ye want. The covetous rich

man, having a desire to have more, is not thankful for what he hath; if you come to borrow money of him, says he, I have need to borrow of you, I am a very beggar, I have nothing. His eye is so much upon what he would have, he forgets what he hath. So many times it falls out spiritually; let your eye therefore be as well upon what you have, as upon what you want.

Be sure of this, that you maintain the sense of your own unworthiness. No man more thankful than David, no man more sensible of his unworthiness than David; continually thankful, continually sensible of his unworthiness. There is a twofold unworthiness: creature unworthiness and sinful unworthiness. Accordingly a twofold sense of unworthiness; one that arises from the apprehension of creature unworthiness, of emptiness of that is in us as creatures; and another that arises from sense of guilt of sin. See them both in the viiith Psalm. The psalmist there praises the Lord: verse 1, "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" He praises the Lord. This thankfulness was raised from the sense of unworthiness, it was creature unworthiness: "Lord, what is man? O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. Lord, what is man?" Look into the cxvith Psalm, and there ye find the psalmist praising God upon the sense of unworthiness too: "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." And at the 12th verse, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" Here is his thankfulness. It was raised upon sense of unworthiness. But what unworthiness? Sinful unworthiness: verse 11, "I said in my haste, All men are liars: what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" He was sensible of his own unworthiness, and it was a sinful unworthiness: "I said in my haste, All men are liars:" yet God is gracious to me: "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" So now it will be with you. If ye can but keep the sense of your own unworthiness, you will say, I was a wretched and a great sinner, and though I have but little in the world, yet any thing is too much for one that was such a great sinner as I was; you will be thankful for every thing, in every thing thankful; maintain but this.

Beloved, ye see how in all these troubles of these times God hath given us our lives for a prey. As the Lord said concerning Job: "Only spare his life," chap. ii. 6; so hath the Lord said concerning us, Spare their lives. God did not deal so by our Saviour Christ. When our Saviour Christ came into the world, he met with hard dealing from wicked men, and his life went for it. He did not say, "Only spare his life;" his life went for it. You have more, in this respect, than our dear Saviour had; you have your lives given you for a prey in these evil times, our Saviour had not. Shall we not, then, be thankful in every thing? having more than our Saviour had in this respect, shall we not be thankful for any thing; for any thing that God gives us shall we not now be thankful? How many are there that walk directly contrary unto this truth that I have spread before you: in every thing thankful: and they in nothing thankful, in nothing contented: husband godly, children hopeful, estate comfortable, and yet never contented; servants cannot please, children cannot please, friends cannot please; never contented. Oh, is this a duty, to be in every thing thankful; how do they lie in a sin, and the breach of this commandment, that are in nothing contented, never pleased. Beloved, I do not now come to call for contentment and patience and quietness under affliction, but for thankfulness; and not for thankfulness only, when all goes well with you, but for thankfulness in every thing. Oh, therefore, let us return unto our own souls, consider how it hath been with us. If there be ever a discontented man or woman, read this sermon, consider this scripture. The Lord says, "Be in every thing thankful;" and thou hast been in nothing thankful, in nothing contented in thy condition. Oh, how will you answer it at the great day? Let me leave this exhortation with you, in your bosoms; the Lord knows into what condition we may come, whether into affliction, or persecution, or desertion, or of temptation; remember here lies your duty before you, lay it up in your hearts: "It is the will of God, even our Father, that we should be thankful to him in every thing;" not in some things, not when things go well only, when we have victory; but in all things thankful; "In every thing give thanks unto God; for this is the will of God our Father concerning you."

SERMON VI.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

A Sermon, Preached at Christ's Church, October 26, 1647.

Matthew xv.

" 21. *Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

22. *And behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

23. *But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us.*

24. *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

25. *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

26. *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs,*

27. *And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.*

28. *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*"

Ye have in this story a great storehouse of heavenly comfort and instruction. I shall labour, briefly, to open it at this time unto ye.

The words tell us of a great miracle wrought by our Saviour Christ: casting out the devil in one that was possessed. Concerning which cure two things are considerable: where this cure was wrought; and by what means it was wrought. Wrought in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; and by means of a woman's faith, for our Saviour said, " O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole." The greatness of this woman's faith is set out by three great temptations that she did meet withal

when she came and besought our Saviour for the cure of her child.

First, "He answered her not a word;" but was silent to all her misery and prayer. This was a great temptation, a great trial.

Secondly, He was not only silent, but when the disciples spake for her, he seems to give her a flat denial: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And this was a further and greater temptation.

Thirdly, When yet she pressed in upon him, he seems to give her the repulse, and to call her dog: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." Here was a great temptation indeed. But her faith wrought through all these temptations. And because, as ye shall see and hear in the opening of the words, that there is none of all these temptations but one time or other may befal the best of God's children, it will be good for us to observe how this woman's faith wrought through every temptation, that we may do the like in our temptations.

But before we come unto that. The Holy Ghost here would have us take notice, first, from whence Christ came, and upon what occasion. Secondly, Whither he came, and how he was received.

First of all, it is said here, "Then Jesus went thence:" he went from the Jews. He had been, as ye read in the former part of the chapter, disputing with them against their traditions: "Ye have made the commandments of God void through your traditions," verse 6. Whereupon they were much offended, verse 12. Our Saviour now then goes from them; they were offended, and rejected his words, and he goes from them. These were the Jews that dwelt at Jerusalem, not the meanest neither, the scribes and pharisees, the learned men of that time, and those that were most in account for holiness. See what entertainment the gospel finds in Christ's own time among the learned and those that were accounted the most holy: scribes, learned men, and the pharisees, the most precise and strict men of those times, and yet here the gospel is rejected by them. Christ goes away, Christ goes from thence upon this account.

None more rigorous opposers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, than learned men, and such as go for holy and pre-

cise men, being wedded to their own inventions: so were these here. Know ye, therefore, men wedded to their own inventions, though never so learned, or never so strict in their lives; little hope that the gospel or the Lord Christ, should find entertainment among them. Be not offended though this fall out.

Jesus went from thence: but whither went he? The text says, "He departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." How so? Our Lord and Saviour Christ, commanded his disciples, that they should not go into the way of the gentiles; but says he, "Go and preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but go not into the way of the gentiles," Matt. x. 5, 6. Will Christ forbid his disciples and apostles to go into the way of the gentiles, and will he himself go into the way of the gentiles, go into Tyre and Sidon, how can this be? Some answer it thus: That the law-giver was not bound unto the law that he made himself. Others answer it thus: That our Lord and Saviour did not go unto Tyre and Sidon for to preach, but he went thither to be hid. And in Mark vii., where ye have the same story, "From thence he arose and went to Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it." In this respect now, he did not forbid his disciples to go into the way of the gentiles.

But the answer is clear, both in Matthew xv., and that same of Mark, "He departed εις ταμεξη unto the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." And in Mark vii. 34., "He arose and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon." He went unto some place of Judea; he did not go into the way of the gentiles, but he went unto some town and place in Judea, which was upon the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

And here now he being, a woman comes unto him, who is described at verse 22., from her country; and from the action which she did. "Behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him saying," &c.

A woman, a woman of Canaan, and "behold a woman of Canaan." As if that the Holy Ghost would have us take special notice of it, "Behold, a woman of Canaan came unto him." The Canaanites were of all others the most wicked: the Jews were for to cast them out of their nation, and not to converse with them: in the Jews' account they were dogs. And therefore our Saviour says afterward, "It is not lawful

to cast children's bread unto dogs." She was a Canaanite. But now this woman, this Canaanite, she believes; comes unto Christ, and believes greatly: "O woman, great is thy faith."

Pray let us observe the wonderful dispensation of God here. The Jews that Christ was sent unto, they rejected Christ: a Canaanite that is called a dog, receives Christ. Oh, the wonderful dispensation of God's grace. Mercy takes those in, and free grace takes in those into Christ that are most unlikely. The Jews they were called the children of the kingdom; the children they turn dogs: "Beware of the concision, beware of dogs," Phil. iii. 2. Children turn dogs: and dogs turn children: the Canaanite, a dog, becomes a child and believes; and the Jews that were the children of the kingdom, they turn dogs and rend Christ; oh, what free grace and love is here. Who would rest upon any outward privilege though it be never so great? Who would be discouraged in regard of any unworthiness though it be never so much?

But what says the woman? Says she, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou son of David." Why does she call him the Son of David, and not rather the son of Abraham; and not rather the son of Adam; and not rather the Son of Man? as Christ was often called; why does she here call him the Son of David?

We find in Scripture, that Christ and David did often exchange names. "And David your king shall reign over you," Jer. xxx. 9. A promise is made to the Jews yet to be converted; that is, Christ, David your king, and not Abraham, shall reign over you; but David your king. David was the king of the people of God, and was to feed them: and so Jesus Christ is king of the church, and feeds the people of God. Abraham was not a king, David a king; and therefore, thou Son of David, and not thou Son of Abraham. And then, Messiah ordinarily among the Jews was called David. And therefore this woman here says, "O Lord, thou Son of David."

She does first of all acknowledge his Deity; and therefore she calls him Lord, "O Lord:" she does acknowledge his humanity, and incarnation; and therefore she says, "Thou

Son of David." Her faith was rightly planted; here now ye have her faith in the mustard seed; look but down a few verses, and you find it grown up into a great tree, that the birds of the air, and the saints may come and build their nests in the branches of her faith, But here it is planted. She had in her own country, some that by exorcism did undertake for to cast out devils: she does not go to them: she had her own gods in her own country, she leaves them, and she singles out Christ, and she singles out that name, title, and attribute of Christ, wherein was most of the covenant, and most of the promise: and her faith now, being thus rightly planted, it rises up unto great perfection, she comes on with boldness.

But stay, O woman, a little, thou art a great sinner, thou art a Canaanite, and so a dog, and what dost thou coming unto Jesus Christ? I know what I do, might she say, I do not come to Peter, I do not come to James, I do not come to John; but I come to Christ, and I come to mercy, to mercy itself. I do not plead mine own righteousness, or mine own patience, or my humility, or prayer, or perseverance in prayer; but I plead mercy, "Have mercy on me, O Lord." Behold a miracle in the midst of a miracle, says Chrysostom. The angels in heaven cover their faces in beholding the glory of Jesus Christ; and a poor woman here on earth comes with boldness: the cherubims and seraphims in heaven, says he, fear before Christ; fear above, and faith below; fear in angels, faith and boldness in a poor woman, she comes with boldness.

If faith be true and right, it lays aside all one's own righteousness, and comes unto naked mercy; passes by all other helps and means, singles out Christ, that name and title of Christ that hath most of the covenant, and of God's love in it.

She does not only come with boldness, but she comes with prayer, "Have mercy upon me," &c. She comes praying, for she came believing. Faith and prayer well go together. Prayer is the issue of faith. Faith is prayer in the coal, and prayer is faith in the flame; she comes praying. And mark also, she comes with love; and such love, as makes another body's infirmity and weakness one's own: for she does not say thus, "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil," have mercy on my *daughter;* but have mercy on *me:* her

daughter's vexation is her own, her infirmity is her own. Faith wrought the love here. Oh, that parents would imitate this woman, and go unto Jesus Christ for their children that are vexed with devils. If a child be sick in body, a parent will run to God and cry for help; but children's souls may be vexed with devils, every lust and sin is a devil, and they do not run to Christ, and say, Oh, Lord, have mercy on me; for my daughter, or my son, or my child is vexed with an unclean devil, or a profane devil; but this woman, having planted her faith rightly, her faith here it does work by prayer, and it works by love, and she says thus, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

But what now is Christ's answer to her? "He answered her not a word." Now comes the temptation, the three great temptations; do not wonder that I call these temptations. It is true, God tempteth no man, and Christ tempteth no man; but take temptation for trial, so Christ tempts, so God tempteth. Satan, he tempts a man for to draw out his sin; but Christ tempts for to draw out our faith. Satan's temptations are black within, white and sweet without; but Christ's temptations are black without, white and sweet within.

The first temptation therefore, you have here, "He answered her not a word." Not a word! Christ is called the Word: the Word answers not a word. The fountain of mercy seems to be enclosed; as if he rejected her, and her condition; as if he cared not for it, nor for her; he answered her not a word. Here was a great temptation upon the woman, a great trial; for she might say thus: I have heard "that the Lord heareth prayer;" and now I come and pray unto him, he answers me not a word; how is the Scripture true? I have heard that this man says, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you:" and now I do come unto him, he answers me not a word. The centurion came unto him, and he helped him. A poor leper came unto him, and he helped him: my condition is worse than any body's. Here was a great temptation, Christ answered her not a word.

Though Christ answered her not a word, he heard every word; in not answering her, he answered her. In not

speaking, Christ speaketh much, many times, for when he speaks no answer to your prayers, the language of his actions speaks thus: Pray on, cry on, and lift up your voice on high. Christ holds the door close, not that he may keep you out, but that he may make you knock the more. Christ lets you continue praying, not because he does not regard your prayer, but because he loves your prayer so well, that he would hear your prayer again and again. Christ knows that strength comes in wrestling.

It is no new thing, then, for believers to have no present, visible answer to their prayers. But mark, although they have no visible answer to their prayers, they have invisible strength: he answered her not a word to her prayer, but he assisted her all that while in praying: he gives her no answer to her prayer, but he gave her prayer, he gave her faith to continue in prayer. So long therefore, as the Lord Jesus Christ does send down his Spirit upon your heart in prayer; though you have no visible answer unto your prayer, yet if he uphold your heart in believing, still to hang upon him, still to wait upon him, your condition is not new, it is no other than that which befals the best of God's children and true believers: thus it befel this woman.

If this temptation do befal any of you as it befel this woman, to have no visible answer unto your prayer; pray do as this woman did. What did she?

He answered her not a word; but still she does acknowledge that he was able to help her, does acknowledge his Deity, and says, "Lord." So do you.

She does acknowledge; that it is his office for to help: and therefore she says, "Thou Son of David." So do you also say in your heart, Though I have not help for the present, it is the office of Christ to help me; he is the Son of David.

She does not rest upon her own duty, or her own righteousness; but she comes unto mere mercy, and she waits on that. So do you also.

She does propound her misery, leave her misery at the feet of Christ, and does not stint or limit him to this or that means. "Lord," says she, "my daughter is grievously vexed;" but she does not say how she would have her daughter cured, she leaves that to Christ, only propounds

her misery, and leaves that at the feet of Christ, to take his own way, and use his own means. So do you also.

She continues yet praying, yea, when the disciples had done. The disciples they said, "Send her away for she crieth after us," verse 23. Christ made an answer to them, and ye hear no more of the disciples, they had done. Thus do you also, as this woman did, though your friends, and the disciples of Christ that have been praying for you, be weary, have done, and have no more to speak for you; yet hold you out, and continue praying. Thus did this woman, she would not leave Christ, but she comes on afresh, she comes unto him again.

What is Christ's answer? "He answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Here now is the second temptation. And this indeed seems to be greater than the former. Before, he answered her not a word; and now here is denial, seeming denial, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This temptation is greater: for now in this his dealing, his way seems to run cross unto promises. The promise was made unto the gentiles; the Old Testament is full of it, Isa. xlii. 1. "He shall bring forth judgment unto the gentiles." verse 6. "I have given thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles." And so in many places, mercy is promised unto the gentiles. Here now our Saviour says, "I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." His dealing with this woman seems to run cross to the promises. Yea, now he comes to the great unanswerable objection; as if he should say thus: There are a company of poor lost ones, that are my sheep, elected, predestinated to salvation from all eternity; and I am sent unto them, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Whereupon this woman might say, Nay then, what do I waiting any longer? for if I be not one of the elect, if I be not one of Christ's sheep, then there is no hope for me. This was a great, and a very great temptation, to lay these words before her, a great trial, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But mark her carriage; she does not fall to dispute the matter of election, or predestination; she came and worshipped him, saying, "Lord help me," verse 24. As if she should say, Lord, whether I be elected or not, I

do not know; whether I be one of those lost sheep or no, I cannot tell, but I am sure I am lost, and therefore, O Lord, help me. Observe,

A man's temptations may rise higher and higher, even after prayer; and yet pray aright. This woman did pray before, and her temptation arises after prayer, yet her prayer right, and her faith right.

Observe this, that God's dealings, or Christ's dealings with a man, may sometimes seem to be cross to his very promise, and yet a man's condition right. So here with this woman.

That it may be the case of some of God's children, to be exercised about their election and predestination; and temptations concerning election and predestination thrown in upon them.

That in case any poor believer, that is a weak person, weak in the faith, be tempted and tried about election or predestination, the best way for the present is, to lay that dispute by; and to run to mercy, and say, "Lord help me:" and for the present, not to dispute whether he be a sheep or no, elected or no, predestinated or no, but run to Christ, and go to prayer, and say, Lord help me, and lay the dispute by.

Again, As our temptations increase, so our faith shall increase. The woman's temptations rose, so did her faith too; "She came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me:" still she held on and and hung upon Jesus Christ. According to the increases of our temptations, so shall the increases of our faith be.

If all this will not do, behold now a third, and a greater temptation. "He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs."

"It is not meet to cast children's bread to *dogs*." The word in the original is, a *whelp*. A dog grown, or a mastiff, may be, and is good for something, of great use; but what is a whelp good for, for the present, of what use? It is not meet to cast children's bread unto whelps.

"To *cast* children's bread." It intimates thus much, that God does cast out some outward blessings upon wicked men that are even dogs: but the bread of children is so dispensed, gospel bread is so dispensed, as nothing shall be lost.

Here was a very great temptation, and greater than the

other. Dog is most unworthy. When the Scripture would set out the unworthiness of a man, and the abject condition of any, he is called a dog. Goliah could understand this, "Am I a dog, that thou comest out thus against me," 1 Sam. xvii. 43. Am I so base, vile, and unworthy? am I a dog? And so Mephibosheth, when he would acknowledge his own unworthiness to David he calls himself, a dog, and a dead dog. So Hazael, "Am I a dog?" Yet says our Saviour here, "It is not meet to cast children's bread unto dogs." This woman now, her heart might have risen, and she might have said thus, One would think I am no dog; I am no dog; I am a woman, though a sinful woman, but I am no dog: I have now come and spread my condition, and misery before ye; if ye will not relieve me, do not miscall me; if ye will not help me, yet do not abuse me; if ye will not help me, yet pity me, do not call me dog, I am no dog. The Jews, that you call the children of the kingdom, they indeed are dogs, they turn again and rend you, but I do not turn again and rend you, I am no dog. Her heart might have risen at this phrase: here was a great temptation now, a mighty trial here in this third thing.

It is no new thing for true believers, God's own people, to have their unworthiness objected to them. It is an ordinary thing amongst men and women: I am unclean, I am unworthy of communion with the saints, communion with God's people, with Christ, I am a dog, I am most unworthy; it is no new thing for true believers to have their own unworthiness objected to them.

But mark, how this woman's faith works through this temptation. Says she, "True, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

"True." The word is the same that in the Corinthians, ye translate, protest. "I protest by our rejoicing, that I die daily," 1 Cor. xv. 33. And it should rather be translated so; "Yea, by our rejoicing we die daily:" rather than in the form of an oath, as it is there, it is the same word that is here for, true.

Ye cannot charge a believer so deeply, or speak so meanly of him, but he does think and speak as meanly of himself: Lord, that dost call me a dog, and one that is most unworthy; true, Lord, I am most unworthy. Some, they will

dispraise themselves; but if you dispraise them too, then they will be angry; if you fall in with their own dispraises, and say, It is true: then they will be angry. But a true believer, you cannot speak or think so meanly of him, but he will say, True, Lord, true.

"Lord." Observe here, she calls Christ, Lord, when Christ calls her dog. Lord, says she, though thou speakest dishonourably of me, yet I will speak honourably of thee: though I am a dog in thy mouth, thou art a Lord in my mouth. A gracious heart, and a true believer, will speak and think honourably of Jesus Christ, even then, at that time, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall suffer the greatest dirt and reproach to be thrown upon him: True, Lord.

"But the dogs eat the crumbs." True faith finds out a promise in the very refusal, in Christ's refusal: finds out encouragement in the bowels of discouragement. True, Lord, bread is for children; that is the loaf, the piece that is cut off the loaf; but the crumbs do as well belong to a dog, as the loaf belongs to the child. And, Lord, thou sayest I am a dog, therefore a crumb does belong to me. True faith, it gathers in upon Jesus Christ, and gathers in upon him by that very hand that seems to put the soul away from him: it makes advantage of a discouragement, and gathers it upon Jesus Christ even by that hand that does thrust it away. "The dogs eat the crumbs."

Again, You may observe here, that the least of Christ is highly prized with a true believer: a gracious heart, a true believer does highly prize and value the least of Christ. A crumb, a crumb; oh, if I may have but a crumb; a crumb shall be welcome; Lord, a crumb of mercy is welcome: the loaves are for children, but if I can get a crumb I will praise God for it, I will be contented. The least, the worst of Christ in the eye of a believer is highly valued, and he sets a great price upon it.

Lastly, All this is said by a woman. Women usually are not of that boldness, but more easily dashed out of countenance. Faith rises above our nature and above our natural disposition. Faith had gotten into this woman's heart, and she forgets her own disposition, she come like any man with boldness upon Jesus Christ, follows him, and will never let

him alone. Faith rises above our own dispositions and above our natures.

From all this you may observe here, if you be tempted with consideration of your own unworthiness, how you should give an answer unto those temptations. Do as this woman did: If I be a dog, Lord, yet I am thy dog; and if I be a dog, Lord, yet crumbs belong to me; and if I be never so great a sinner, mercy and grace is for sinners, and I come to mercy. Oh, still, still hang upon Jesus Christ, still hang upon Jesus Christ, and never let him go. *Ab negando promittit*, he does promise in denying. There was honeycombs found in the body of the lion. Do but hang upon Jesus Christ, hang upon him by faith, and you will find honeycombs in the midst of all those temptations and discouragements that you do meet withal. And though for the present he does seem to give a denial unto all your prayers, yet at the last he will own your prayers, he will own your faith, and he will say unto thee, man or woman, "Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

I come to the victory after this combat. "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Here, now, the Lord does give a testimony of her faith, and he does give her the mercy desired. First, he commends her faith, and, secondly, he commends the greatness of her faith, "O woman, great is thy faith."

Why does he rather commend her faith than other graces? She had other graces. Here is humility in this woman to be seen; here is a great deal of wisdom in this woman to be seen; here is prayer; here is perseverance in prayer. Christ commends none of these, but commends her faith. Why does he rather commend her faith than any other grace?

Faith does commend Christ above all the other, and therefore Christ will commend faith above all other duties or graces. Faith honours Christ, and Christ will honour faith. It is faith that gives a being to, and is the root of all other graces. He commends that. It is only faith that brings Christ and the soul together; and therefore he does commend faith above all other graces.

If the Lord Jesus Christ does commend faith so, why should we not all labour especially to strengthen our faith.

Get faith, you that have it not; and strengthen it, you that have it. Get humility, patience, wisdom; be much in prayer, and continue in prayer; but above all things get faith. Faith is the grace commended by Jesus Christ above all other graces; therefore we should labour above all for to get faith, and to strengthen faith. It is observed from this place, that Christ commends none but the gentiles, the faith of the gentiles. He says concerning the centurion, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel;" he was a gentile. And here he says concerning this woman, "O woman, great is thy faith;" and she was a gentile. Whatever, therefore, thou hast been; though a Canaanite, though a sinner, though a great sinner; get faith, labour to strengthen thy faith, and the Lord Jesus Christ will own thy faith at last. Though for the present he seems to hide himself from thee, yet he will own it at the last, and he will commend it at the last.

He commends here the greatness of her faith. Wherein was the greatness of her faith? Faith consists in the knowledge of Christ, assent unto the truth, a relying upon God in Christ in time of temptation; it is a coming to Jesus Christ, an adherence to him. But the greatness of her faith lay in this, that in the midst of all these temptations, yet she did hang on Christ, and would not be beaten off by any of these discouragements or temptations. Here was the greatness of her faith.

The strength of faith does not lie in the assurance of our salvation, or of God's love, or of the mercy that we desire in prayer; one may have strong faith, and yet no assurance; I say, not only faith, but strong faith. This woman had no assurance, that we read of, not assurance of the thing that she begged, that the Lord would hear her prayer; she had no assurance of it, only she hung upon Christ, and would not away. And when he put her away, she gathered in upon him; in the midst of all temptation and opposition still she did hang upon him. So, then, a man may have faith, and strong faith, although he have no assurance.

And, upon this account, how many are there that have strong faith, that think they have no faith all. Some think they have no faith because they cannot say, Christ is mine, mercy is mine, heaven is mine; but yet, if in the time of your temptation ye can hang upon Christ, and will not away from

Christ, but will still hang upon him, still wait upon him; you have not only faith, but you may have strong faith, a great faith, as this woman had. And let me tell you this for your comfort: at the last the Lord will make a report of your faith unto your own heart; yea, he will make a report answerable to your temptation; for you may observe here, that as the wound was made, so the plaster was laid. You have three great temptations: answerably, now, the Lord Jesus Christ does testify of this woman. First of all, "He answered her not a word," would not own her, would not speak to her: now, says he, "O woman." Then he said that "he was not sent but unto the lost sheep:" now he does own her for a sheep, and he says she hath faith. Before, he says, "It is not meet to cast children's bread to dogs:" this did argue that she was a dog, one most unworthy: now, he says, that she is most worthy; O woman, thou hast not only faith, but thou hast a great faith; "O woman, great is thy faith." So that, I say, still hang upon Christ; in all your temptations, in the midst of all your discouragements, still hang upon Christ; and the Lord Jesus, he will not only make a report of your faith unto ye, but, according as your temptations rise, so shall the report of your grace be from the Lord Christ unto your poor soul: therefore hang upon Christ.

He does not only here give a testimony of her faith, and the greatness of her faith, but now he does give the thing: "Be it unto thee as thou wilt." Christ can deny nothing to a true believer. A believer may have what he will of Christ at last. Christ cannot hold: though he do hide himself from his brethren, as Joseph did, for a time, he cannot hold it out always, he cannot hold out the siege always, but he will give up himself to a poor believer; O poor believer, be it according as thou wilt; thou wouldest have grace, thou wouldest have this or that mercy, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

I will only take one lesson from all and so conclude.

And the great lesson that we should all learn from this whole story is, to believe in the face of all discouragement, of all opposition, all temptation; still to hang upon Jesus Christ. The very reading of this story provokes us hereunto. Whatsoever your temptations be, whatever your discouragements be, yet hang on Christ, never away, still wait upon him.

You say, it may be, But I fear Christ and the promise does not belong to me.

But did Jesus Christ ever say unto ye with his own mouth, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep," and thou art none? He said so to this woman, and yet she did hang upon him, and he commended her for her faith.

But you will say unto me, I have been at prayer, I have prayed long, and I hear nothing of all my prayers.

This woman did pray to Christ, he answered her not a word, and yet she did hang upon him, yet she did believe: and she is commended for her believing.

You will say, I am one that have been a great sinner, an unclean wretch, even as a dog; surely there is no hope and no mercy for me.

Did the Lord Jesus Christ ever himself say to you, as he said to this woman, seeming to call her dog? yet she did hang upon him, yet she did wait upon him, yet she did believe, and the Lord commended her for her faith.

I pray, indeed, but it is my necessities make me go unto God in prayer; and when I go unto God in prayer, my necessities put me on.

And was it not so with this woman? Her daughter was grievously vexed with a devil, and thereupon her necessity drave her unto Christ; and yet, poor woman, she is welcome.

But I do not go unto Jesus Christ: I go not unto Christ at all.

But Jesus Christ yet will come to you. This woman did not come to Jerusalem, Christ went down unto the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; Christ came to her, and yet she believed: this stood with faith, and Christ commended her faith.

I have no assurance of Christ's love and mercy towards me.

Tell me, Had this woman any assurance of this mercy that she prayed for? She only brings in her wants, propounds them to Jesus Christ, lays them at his feet, hangs upon him; and this was her faith, and she is commended for her faith, and the greatness of her faith: "O woman, great is thy faith." So that, do but now hang on Christ, though thou hast not assurance of thy salvation, or of the love of God, yet in the face of all temptations, and all discouragement, hang on Christ, never away, never be beaten off by

any discouragement, hang on Christ, wait on Christ, and the Lord Christ will at last commend thee as thou wilt. How shall people that go on in a continued way of doubting and unbelief, ever look this poor woman in the face at the great day of judgment, this poor Canaanitish woman? How will you be able, you that go on in a continual way of doubting and unbelief, to look the Lord Jesus Christ in the face? Stir up yourselves, stir up yourselves, I beseech you, to this great work of believing. I confess it is a hard thing to believe, and harder to believe than to keep all the ten commandments. There is something in nature to contribute towards the keeping of the ten commandments, but there is nothing in nature to contribute to thy believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a very hard thing to believe truly; and those that make it an easy matter, they do not know what it is to believe. But read over this story, and your hearts will be provoked to believe, to hang upon Jesus Christ. Do it, and the Lord will commend your faith, and own you and your faith.

SERMON VII.

A VINDICATION OF ORDINANCES.

PREACHED AT STEPNEY, JULY 15, 1649.

PREFACE.

GOOD READER.—The Jews say, that there is not the least letter of the word, upon which huge mountains do not hang. Luther saith, That one tittle of the word is greater than heaven and earth. But our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ saith, "That heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Shall we then stand still, behold and see the ordinances of Christ wrested from us, and not bear witness against it? Upon this account, though the entreaties of divers friends have been very pressing, I am not unwilling that this Sermon concerning ordinances be brought into public view.

You may read in the Scripture, that in the times next before Christ and his glorious coming, professors shall not keep their garments which they were used to wear with honour. Therefore saith our Saviour, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame," Rev. xvi. 15. When shall this be? In the time of the pouring out of the sixth vial, which is immediately before the coming of Christ: for he saith, then, "Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth," &c. In Matt. xxiv. it is said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall appear the sign of the Son of Man," ver. 29, 30. What days are those? Even the days when men shall say of Christ, "Behold he is in the desert, behold he is in the secret chamber," ver. 26. Gone from the public ordinances, only to be enjoyed in private. Who shall those be that shall say thus? Such as would fain be reputed prophets, such as have had a hand in the great works of God in those times, and such as have been great and high professors; for saith our Saviour, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch as, if it be possible, they shall deceive the very elect," ver. 24. But when shall these things be? Immediately before Christ's coming, ver. 29, for saith he, "Verily this generation," that is, the generation on which he spake of, not which he spake to, "shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." So that immediately before the glorious coming of Christ, men shall depart from, and cast away the precious ordinances of Jesus Christ: which is as well grief as comfort to us: grief, that there should be such declinings; comfort, that our Lord is at hand. This declining is an ill sin, but a good sign: as an ill sin, it is grief; as a good sign of Christ's coming, so it is comfort. And if our Lord and Saviour be at hand, even at the door, who would not watch and keep his garments? Shall we not watch with him one hour? The scope and drift of this Sermon is, to call upon your's and mine own soul to watch. Wherein is proved, both in the general, that ordinances, and in particular, that such and such ordinances ought to be still continued, and that new testament believers are still to live under the same; not that they should not live beyond them, in the use of them; for in the way of nature we are to use our daily bread, though we

do live beyond it. Living under an ordinance as Christ's appointment, and living beyond it in regard of divine enjoyment, are not repugnant: but that believers should so live beyond the ordinances, as that they are not bound to the use thereof, is the thing which this Sermon lies against.

I have not spoken of the Lord's day herein. There are divers treatises abroad which do prove *that* an ordinance of Christ to be still continued; and the clearing and proving thereof, requires more time than an hour or two in preaching would admit. Neither have I spoken much unto that objection, namely, That all the ordinances of Christ do hang upon the ministry, and there can be no ministry now, because those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost are wanting: for the question before me was not, Whether the ordinances may or can possibly continue? but, Whether they ought to continue? Yet as to that objection, I add, if you look into 1 Tim. i. 3, where the apostle Paul doth set down the qualifications of one who is fit to be a minister of the gospel; ye shall not find one word declaring that those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, are any part of the essential qualification of an elder or bishop. The apostle shews how a man should be qualified that is made a deacon, ver. 8—12; how a widow should be qualified who is to be taken into that number, chap. v. 9, 10; and how a bishop or elder should be qualified, chap. iii.: but though he set down many particulars of the qualifications of a man fit for that office, yet not one word of these extraordinary gifts, plainly speaking this truth, that those gifts are not of the essence of a minister of the gospel; yea, where do we find that those ordinary elders chosen in the apostles' time, Acts xiii.; Titus i., were endued with such gifts? Apostles and evangelists, who were extraordinary officers, and not to continue, had those gifts; we read they had them, but where do we read that the ordinary elders, who were to continue, had these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost constantly? We find that baptism was administered to those persons who had none of these gifts, Acts viii. 15, 16, 17; that the Lord's Supper was administered to Christ's disciples, before the Holy Ghost in those gifts fell upon them, Matt. xxvi.; and that the church's censure requires no such gifts, Matt. xviii. Now therefore if the ordinances may be received without them, and they are not of the essence of the ministry; why should any man think that the ordinances of Jesus Christ do so hang upon these, that if these be wanting, the ordinances cannot be used or administered?

And as for the Lord's day, which is called the Lord's day, as the Lord's Supper is, because of the Lord's appointment and institution; who doth not see how the power of godliness hath grown and thriven under the droppings thereof? What nation or kingdom is there under all the heavens, where the power of godliness hath flourished more than in England? Why? Not excluding other reasons of God's grace and free love to us, but because the Lord's day hath lived more institution-wise in England, than in any other part of the world. And what gracious man is there in all this nation who may not rise up and say to this day, Blessed art thou amongst the days of the week: my soul doth, yea, and all generations shall call thee blessed.

The other Sermon (the eighth in this volume) is about Grace and Gifts; the excellency of grace and love above gifts; whereunto we shall do well that we take heed, for if our gifts do wax wanton, they will despise ordinances, and kick against grace itself, which they have the more cause to nourish, because they live plentifully under the roof of grace. Happy is the man whose gifts do cherish his graces, and whose graces do produce gifts: and as diversities of gifts should not make us disagree or envy one another, but rather bind us in love to one another; so extraordinary enjoyments should not draw us from ordinary means,

but quicken up our hearts thereunto. As if God do marvellously bless us without prayer, and we be driven the more unto prayer by it, then it is of God and his love; but if it cause us to leave or neglect prayer, then it is perilous. Now these are perilous times, for they are the last times; wherefore, good reader, let us rather desire to have plain grace than fine gifts, for this is the more excellent way.

I have not had so much time to peruse these two Sermons as I would, for the notes stayed a very little while in my hands; but I find they are agreeable to what I delivered in preaching, whereunto I have made some little addition. The title, &c. I left to my friends who desired the printing; the mending of some press-faults I must leave to the pen of the reader. Now the good Lord himself, who hath often refreshed our souls with the sense of his love in Christ Jesus, keep all our feet in his ways, and grant that we may hold fast what we have, lest another take our crown.

Your's in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

"*Unto Him shall ye hearken.*"—DEUT. xviii. 15.

THESE words are spoken concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our great prophet; whose work and office it is, to reveal and make known the mind and will of God the Father unto us. Our duty therefore is, to hearken unto him. And this is that inference which the Lord himself makes here, "Unto him shall ye hearken." Only ye may observe, that when the apostle Peter in Acts iii. doth cite this scripture, he gives you a double exposition: for whereas it is said in verse 19 of this chapter, "It shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him;" Peter in Acts iii. 23 renders it thus, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear the prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." And whereas it is said here in the text, "Unto him shall ye hearken;" Peter in Acts iii. 23, renders it thus, "Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you." So that this is the great inference and use that the Lord himself doth make of this prophetical office of Christ, "Unto him shall ye hearken."

It will be therefore worth our time to consider, what it is for to hearken to him, this great Prophet. Know therefore, that when he saith, "Unto him shall ye hearken;" the meaning is, unto him alone, and to none else; as, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," our Saviour translates, "And him only shalt thou serve." So here, "Unto him shall ye

hearken;" that is, to him only, to him alone, and to none else.

Now a man is said to hearken unto Christ, this great Prophet, either when he doth acknowledge, receive, and submit unto his appointments; or else when he doth obey his voice with the obedience of faith. I say, first, a man is said to hearken unto Christ, this great Prophet, when he doth receive, acknowledge, and submit unto his appointments. And therefore if you compare Matt. x. with Luke x, ye shall find that hearing and receiving is the same thing. In Matt. x. 40, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." In Luke x. 16, "He that heareth you, heareth me." What is hearing in one, is receiving in the other: so that I say, first, a man is said to hear Christ, this great Prophet, when he doth receive, acknowledge, and submit unto his appointments: this is our duty. When it is said, "Unto him shall ye hearken," this is here commanded.

For the opening therefore, and pressing of this truth, I shall labour,

First, To shew you, what those appointments of Christ, this great Prophet of our's, are, which we are to receive, acknowledge, and submit unto, and thereby to hearken unto him.

Secondly, That these appointments and institutions of his, do still continue and bind us, and that we are still to hearken to him therein: still he lives and speaks in those appointments.

Thirdly, I shall answer to some objections, questions, and cases of conscience concerning ordinances, and the institutions of Christ.

Fourthly, Shew you what a dangerous thing it is for a man to turn his back upon, and ears from, the voice of this great Prophet, speaking in his appointments and institutions.

Fifthly, How and in what manner this hearing work should be rightly performed?

First, If you ask me what these appointments are which we are to receive, acknowledge and submit unto, and so to hearken unto this great Prophet in?

I answer, That if you look into the whole new testament, you shall find the precepts of Christ are either moral, as the ten commandments, or positive. As for the moral precepts of

the ten commandments, though our Lord and Saviour Christ hath added no new thing unto them more than what was before, yet, as I may so speak, he hath put them into another dress than what was formerly put upon them; for saith he in the vth of Matthew, "It hath been said by them of old, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her," &c. In this vth of Matthew there are six cases that our Lord and Saviour Christ speaks unto; in three of them he makes mention of the very words of the moral law; as at verse 21, "Ye have heard it was said of old, Thou shalt not kill." At the 27th verse, "Ye have heard that it was said of old, Thou shalt not commit adultery." So again, verse 33. But, now, when he speaks of the other laws that were not of the ten commandments, ye may observe that he alters his manner of speaking: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye." He doth not say, Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time. When, I say, he speaks of any of the ten commandments, that clause is added; when he speaks of the other three cases, that clause is not added.

Again, You may observe this, that those words, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time;" should be rather translated, as it is in some of your books, "Ye have heard that it was said *by* them of old time;" which appears by the antithesis, or opposition, "But I say."

Again, You may observe, that when he saith, at the 17th verse, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil;" those words, according to the original, may be read thus; "I am not come to destroy but to fill up;" for though Christ added nothing unto the ten commandments, or moral law, yet, notwithstanding, he did more fully reveal and make known what was and is therein commanded; for our Lord and Saviour Christ did not barely speak against the false glosses and interpretations of the Jews and Jewish rabbins, for he instanceth in the words of Moses, and of the law itself. "It hath been said by them, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say, Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust," &c. What, then, were not unclean thoughts forbidden by the law, and in Moses's time? Yes: but when Christ came, he doth more fully and clearly reveal what was before commanded and forbidden

in the law; and so though he hath made no new addition to the law, yet in this respect he hath, as it were, made some advance upon the very moral law, the ten commandments; and herein we are to hearken to him, this great Prophet, by acknowledging, receiving and submitting unto these commands thus opened and interpreted by him.

But now if you look upon the positive precepts or commandments of Christ, you shall find that Jesus Christ hath given forth many that were not given forth in the times of Moses, or of the old testament: for in the times of the old testament circumcision was, now baptism is; then the passover, now the Lord's supper; then their ministers were priests and Levites, now pastors and teachers; then the whole nation of the Jews a church, now as men do believe they are added to the church; then if any man did sin presumptuously he was to be cut off by the sword from among the people, now to be cut off by the censures of the church. So that, I say, if you look upon the positive precepts, there are many that are now given forth by Christ which were not given forth before in the times of Moses and of the old testament; and these, all these we are to receive, to acknowledge, and to submit unto, and herein to hearken to this great Prophet.

But it will be granted on all hands, that there are many appointments, institutions and ordinances which were given forth by this great Prophet in the times of the new testament; but the question is, whether these are to continue still or no? We grant, indeed, that there were such appointments in Christ's own time, and in the apostle's time; for the people of those times, and of that generation: but the question is, whether these still are to continue, and whether still we are to submit, to receive, and to acknowledge these appointments; and so whether still we are to hearken unto Christ herein?

For answer hereunto, observe, I pray, the laying of Christ's appointments, institutions and ordinances. If they be laid and pressed upon universal and perpetual grounds, then they are still to continue. Now you shall find that these appointments, institutions and ordinance of Christ—baptism, the Lord's supper, particular churches, the ministry, church censures, singing of psalms, and the like—are laid upon such

universal and perpetual grounds, as to continue until Christ's coming again.

I shall touch a little upon these particulars, and prove the thing first by way of enumeration.

As for that of particular churches. You find in the book of Revelation, that Christ speaks of things to come after John's time, who lived the longest of all the apostles, at chap. i. 1, thus: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." And chap. iv. 1, at the latter end of the verse, saith the Lord Christ to John, "I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." Now in the ist chapter he gives him a vision of the Son of Man walking between the seven golden candlesticks; and he tells us, at the last verse, that those seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches; shewing that thus Christ would appear unto his people in the way of churches after John's time, in the times that were to come. And so in the close of the book of the Revelation, after he had spoken of all things that should come to pass, saith he, at the 16th verse, "I have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Not in the church in general, but in the churches. And if ye look into the first epistle of Timothy, ye shall find, that the apostle Paul having given directions and several precepts concerning bishops, elders, deacons, widows, and about the ordering of the house of God, which, saith he, is the church of God; he concludes all with a solemn charge, chap. vi. 13, "I give thee charge, in the sight of God, and before Jesus Christ, that thou keep the commandment," not this, but the commandment, according to the old translation, and the original greek, "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Which appearing doth synchronize with the judging of the quick and dead. 2 Tim. iv. 1. But Timothy himself doth not live so long, and therefore this charge lies upon every minister, and others respectively, for so indeed the charge is directed to the man of God, chap. vi. 11, who by the same apostle is interpreted to be every minister. 2 Tim. iii. 17. So that the ordering of God's house by bishops, or elders, deacons and widows is still to continue, and therefore particular churches and congregations for public worship are still to continue.

As for the ministry, you know what the apostle saith in Eph. iv. 11., speaking of Christ, "He gave some, apostles: some, prophets: some, evangelists: and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Well, but how long are these to continue? read verse 13., "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And I pray are we yet come unto this condition? It may be some particular man will dare to say it, that he himself is come unto this condition, this stature of the fulness of Christ; but mark what the apostle saith, till we all come in the unity of faith. What a world of differences in faith are there now amongst us? but saith the apostle, these offices of the ministry are to continue till we *all* come; not till one man comes, or two men come, but till we *all* come unto the unity of the faith; that is not yet come to pass, and therefore the ministry is still to continue; neither can it be said, that this unity of faith is to be understood of the doctrine of faith; for that were to say, that the ministry were to continue till the doctrines and rules for the ministry were given out, and then to cease: and if ye look into Psalm lxviii., from whence these words are cited; ye shall find at verse 18, that Christ hath given these gifts, "That the Lord God might dwell amongst men." As if there were no abode or dwelling for God amongst men, without these gifts; and have we not need still that God should dwell amongst us? yea, and doth not God still dwell amongst us?

As for baptism; you know what our Lord and Saviour Christ said to his disciples, Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go teach all nations, baptizing them." I do not insist upon those words, "Lo, I am with you until the end of the world," though that will carry it; but I pray you mark those words, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them." So that all nations are to be taught and baptized; baptism therefore, is not to end till all nations be taught and baptized; and is that done? read what is said in Matt. xxiv. 14. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." But the end is not yet come. When the gospel is preached unto all na-

tions, then shall the end come; but the end is not yet come, therefore the gospel still is to be preached unto the nations, and they to be baptized, and so this ordinance of baptism is to continue still.

As for that of the Lord's supper; ye know what the apostle saith, "As oft as ye eat, &c., ye shew forth the Lord's death till he come." That cannot be understood of the coming of the Spirit; for so he was come in the apostle's time. But if ye look into 1 Cor. xi., ye shall see what a reason the apostle gives, why he gave out the Lord's supper unto the Corinthians, and they were to receive it; even such a reason as reacheth unto us as well as to the Corinthians, saith he, verse 23., "For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread," &c. He makes this the reason why he gave forth the Lord's supper unto the Corinthians, and why they were to receive it, even because that the Lord Christ did give it to his disciples in the night when he was betrayed, and because he had thus received of the Lord, &c. Now I appeal unto any man, Is not this reason as good a reason upon us, as upon the Corinthians? If indeed the apostle had made this the reason, I have received a message from Christ, that you Corinthians should receive the Lord's supper, then this reason had not bound us as well as them, but the reason that he gives of this dispensation, reacheth to us as well as them, and therefore to continue amongst us as it was used amongst them.

As for the censures of the church, in case that any do offend and continue scandalously and obstinately in their sin; ye know what our Saviour saith in Matt. xviii., "Tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican." Now if you look upon the verses before and after this text, ye shall find that they do all bind us. Verse 10., "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones:" that still continues, So after this text. "Peter came unto Christ and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven times," verse 21., yea, look upon the whole chapter, and the other verses thereof, and ye find that they do still bind us and continue upon us,

why therefore not this also, which you have at verse 17. And if we mind 1 Cor. v., we may see that the apostle Paul doth argue this censure of the church, from universal, perpetual, and moral grounds; cast out therefore the old leaven, why? because "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

As for singing of psalms; you know what is said concerning our Saviour Christ and his disciples when they had received the supper Matt. xvi. 30., "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out." It was a usual practice among the Jews after the passover to sing a hymn: our Saviour Christ did receive the passover then, but he did not sing a psalm or a hymn between the passover and the Lord's supper, but he takes the hymn and removes it from following the passover, and hangs it upon the Lord's supper, to shew that it should be a new testament ordinance.

And they *all* sang: for those that went out did sing, and when they had sung a hymn they all went out.

And they *all* sang together: for if one of them only did sing, then either our Lord and Saviour Christ alone did sing, or some one of his disciples did sing alone: our Lord and Saviour Christ did not sing alone, for the evangelist would have told us so: John tells us, That our Saviour prayed then, and he sets down his prayer in John xvii., and saith he, he prayed, "and he said, Father, glorify thy Son," &c. So if Christ had sung alone, John or some other evangelist would have said that he sung, and would have given us his psalm which he sung, as well as his prayer which he prayed: neither can it be said, that they all sung because they did all consent unto what he did: for they consented unto his preaching, to the miracles which he wrought, and to his prayer which he made; yet it is not said, they wrought this or that miracle when he wrought it; or that they preached, when he preached; or that they prayed, when he prayed alone: yea, where do we find in all the New Testament, that they are said to do any thing that Christ did alone: surely therefore he did not sing here alone, for it is said, "And when they had sung," &c. Nor did one of his disciples sing alone; for to that kind of singing two gifts are required, the gift of prophesy, whereby a man is able to speak in the congregation to the benefit of the whole body; and the melodious gift of singing. Now those gifts were not yet given, for Christ was not yet dead and ascended and therefore one

of the disciples did not sing alone, and if Christ did not sing alone, nor one of his disciples alone, then they all sang together.

Aye, but if they did all sing together, how could it be to edification? For we read in Col. iii., that the apostle says thus, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." How can we teach and admonish one another if we sing altogether? If a disciple do sing alone, he may teach and admonish the rest.

For answer to that, I shall but acquaint you with the misreading of the words; look upon the words in verse 16., and the very right reading will take off this and other scruples. The words are to be read thus, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another: (there is a stop) In psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The words do not run thus, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, stopping there, but in the Greek and original, the words run thus, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another: (there is the stop) In psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." And thus there is a better sense of the words too, and a greater dependence of things together. So that I say, our Lord and Saviour Christ and his disciples did all sing together, and if they all sung together at the supper, why should not his practice be a rule to us as well as his receiving the supper a rule to us; as it is pressed by the apostle in 1 Cor. xi., if Christ could sing thus with his disciples without stinting the Spirit, in whom the Spirit was without measure, then also we may sing together, and yet not stint the Spirit; but Christ and his disciples did all sing together, and that for our example. Thus whether you look upon one or another of these ordinances, ye find that they are still to continue, and that we are to receive, acknowledge and submit unto these appointments, and to hear Christ herein.

But besides these particulars, take three or four general reasons for the continuance of them.

If that the word of the New Testament, as commanding to believe, and promising to give the Spirit; I say,

if this word do continue, then the ordinances of Christ are still to continue. If the appointments, institutions, and ordinances of Christ be not still to continue, then the word of the New Testament, as the commandments of believing, and the promise of giving the Spirit, do not continue neither. There is the same reason: for, when we say that the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed baptism, the Lord's supper, and other ordinances, what do men say? True, these were appointed indeed for those times, when Christ and the apostles lived. But now I pray, may not the same be said concerning the commandment of believing, and concerning the promise of giving the Spirit? You say that you are bound to believe; how prove you that? Say you, because Christ hath commanded me. But I answer you with your own answer, He commanded the men of those times only. You say, that you shall have the Spirit; how prove you that? Christ hath promised it. But how prove you, that the promise of the Spirit reacheth beyond those times? Look what you answer for the ordinances, that may be answered to the commandment of faith, and the promise of giving the Spirit, and so for the whole New Testament. And so both Old and New Testament will fall to the ground, and then we return to heathenism.

If the doctrine of the ordinances be of the foundation of our religion, then certainly the ordinances are still to continue, for without a foundation there is no building. Now if you look into Heb. vi., you shall find, that the doctrine of ordinances is of the foundation of religion, ver. 1, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment." What this baptism is, I will not dispute; what this laying on of hands is, I will not now reason; but certainly they must be ordinances. Now look, saith the apostle, as the doctrine of the resurrection, and eternal judgment, and repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, are fundamental doctrines; so the doctrine of baptisms, and laying on of hands, are of the foundation. Now I say, if these are of the foundation, then the ordinances must still continue. Neither can it be said,

that these doctrines of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, are to be laid aside, because the apostle saith, "Leaving these principles, let us go on to perfection;" for thereby he meaneth only in regard of his pressing, urging, and inculcating thereof upon them; as appears by the words of the former chapter in the last verses: otherwise he should wish them to lay aside the doctrine of the resurrection, eternal judgment, and faith towards God, which he presseth unto in the after part of this very epistle.

If this be a great difference between the ministration of Moses in the time of the Old Testament, and the ministration of Christ, and of the gospel; that the ministration of Moses and the Old Testament was not to continue, and the ministration of the gospel is to continue: then surely the ordinances of Christ are still to abide. Now look into 2 Cor. iii., and there plainly you shall see this difference: "If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, (at ver. 7,) how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" Ver. 11, "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." He makes this difference between the ministration of the gospel and that of Moses, that one is to be done away, and the other remains. Now if the ordinances were not to continue and remain, what difference would there be, as concerning this matter, between the ministration of Moses and the ministration of the gospel? But the apostle here plainly speaks that this is the difference, the ministration of the one to be done away, the ministration of the other doth still continue; therefore the ordinances and the appointments of Christ do still remain.

If there shall be ordinances in the most glorious times that are to come, when there shall be a full pouring out of the Spirit of God upon the children of men, then certainly they are to remain now. And if you look either upon the last of Isaiah, the iiird of Jeremiah, the xivth of Zechariah, or upon other scriptures where mention is made of the most glorious times that are yet to come; ye shall find that there is mention made also of ordinances in those times. Only let us look into the xith chapter of the Revelation, and ye shall find there, at the 15th verse, "The seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms

of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." Here are plainly the glorious times spoken of that are yet to come. Well, shall there be any ordinances then? Yes; for at the 19th verse, "And the temple of the Lord was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." What is this but ordinances? The ark, the visible sign of the presence of God in way of ordinances; and the temple open, though it was shut before. But it is said in the latter end of the book of the Revelation, there shall be no temple. True, no Jewish temple, for there he speaks in that chapter of the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the Jews; but a christian temple shall then be opened again, though shut before in antichristian times, in those glorious times the temple shall be fully opened again. Now, I say, if that in those more glorious times, when the Spirit shall be fully poured out upon the children of men, there shall be ordinances, then certainly they are now to continue; but so it is: surely, therefore, the appointments, institutions and ordinances of Christ are still to continue; we are to acknowledge, receive and submit unto these appointments, and to hearken unto Christ our great Prophet herein.

But what need of ordinances, for I enjoy God most in private; when I go unto God alone, when I am all alone in prayer I enjoy God more than I do under the public ordinances, and therefore what need of them?

Do you enjoy more of God in private; what, more than ever you did in public? Where wert thou then converted? Wert thou not converted under the public ministry? Ordinarily men are converted by the public ministry; and now you have some good affections in private, doth that good affection that you have in private arise to a higher enjoyment of God than your first conversion to God? Do you think that a little affection or drawing out of the heart in private, doth arise to a higher enjoyment of God than your first turning to him? This cannot be. Is it not an easy thing for a man to think that God is most enjoyed when his heart is most affected? It is possible a man's heart may be more affected when God is less enjoyed; such is the deceit of our hearts. God is most enjoyed where God is most served. But, now, suppose God were more enjoyed in private than under public

ordinances, I do but suppose it, yet were this no reason why a man should lay by the public ordinances: for you are sometimes in your closet at prayer, and there you enjoy God; sometimes you are below at dinner and supper, and you have some enjoyments of God there. But, I pray, tell me, whether do you enjoy God more at your ordinary dinner and supper or in your closet in prayer? Surely I enjoy God more in my closet in prayer. And is this a reason why you should never dine and sup again? Yet, notwithstanding, how do people reason thus: I enjoy God more in private, therefore I must lay by the public.

But yet I have not only mine own experience, but I have the experience of divers other precious souls: I know some men and women that have left the ordinances, the public ordinances, and they profess that they never enjoyed more of God than since they have left the ordinances; I have not, therefore, mine own experience only, but I have the experience of divers other gracious people.

Poor soul! Wilt thou hang thy salvation upon another man's experience? Hath not our Lord and Saviour Christ said, that many shall say, "Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many wonderful things in thy name; and Christ will say unto them, Depart, I know you not:" Hath not our Saviour said, "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father." What is the will of the Father? The will of the Father is, That ye hear his Son, "A voice was heard from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." How can ye hear him, and turn your backs upon Christ's appointments; is this the will of the Father?

But now suppose it be so, that others give in their experiences, some that you look upon as godly and precious; and they say, I never enjoyed more of God than since I have left the ordinances. Are there not also divers godly that have said and say, I never enjoyed more of God than in the ordinances? Yea, and are there not a hundred of those to one of the other? Yea, and are there not some, if you go to experience, are there not some that have laid by the ordinances, and by this time are come home, as you say, by *weeping cross?* some that were in the last defeat at Burford, who formerly had laid by the ordinances and said they lived

upon God, and in God immediately, stout-hearted champions; yet being condemned to die, they cried out, and said, Oh that I might live but two days longer: Oh, that I might live but one day longer: Oh, that I might live but one hour longer: I am unprepared for death, I know not how to die. And yet these men said before, that the ordinances were nothing, and they lived in God, and upon God immediately; see what it came to, how their experience shrunk. And wilt thou hang the salvation of thy soul upon the experience of such people as these?

But I do not go the way of experience, neither mine own nor others' experience, but I have scripture, at least I think so, and there are three scriptures especially that do persuade me; and the one is that in the Hebrews: "You shall no longer teach your neighbour, but every man shall be taught of God." Another scripture is that in John: "Ye need not that any man should teach you, for ye are taught of God, and have received the unction of the Holy One, and need not that man should teach you." Another scripture is that of Peter: "We have a more sure word of prophesy, unto which ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." But now the day-star hath arisen in my heart, and therefore why should I attend upon these ordinances any longer?

For answer, Let us I pray consider whether these scriptures do speak any such thing or no.

As for that of the Hebrews, chap. viii., the words run thus: "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, (verse 10) I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their heart;" verse 11, "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother; saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me." Mark the words, they do not run as they are ordinarily cited by people, viz., They shall not teach every man his neighbour, for all shall know the Lord; but thus, "They shall not teach every man his neighbour, nor every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord." That is, they shall not teach them as if they were to teach heathens, that knew not the Lord, but in gospel times they shall teach a knowing people. If it were only said thus, They

shall not teach every man his neighbour, but they shall be all taught of God, then it were another case; but the words run thus, They shall not teach every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord. There is that clause too. That is, they shall not teach an heathenish, unknowing people, but in the times of the gospel, they shall be taught by God, and his ministers shall teach a knowing people.

As for the place in John, ye have it in the 1st Epis. ii. 27: "But the anointing which you have received of him abideth in you, and you need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things." Now if you look into verse 18, you will find that these words are spoken in opposition to antichrist, to the false unction. Χριστος signifieth, *anointed.* Antichrist is the false anointed. Little children, saith he, at verse 18, "It is the last time, and as ye have heard that antichrist (the false anointed) shall come, even so there are false anointeds, but (verse 20, says he) we have an unction from the Holy One." So that plainly, he speaks here of this unction as opposite to the false unction of antichrist. "But (saith he, at verse 27) the anointing which we have received of him, abideth in you, and you need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you." Ye need not be taught by false anointings, and antichristian anointings. That this is the meaning, and that he speaks in opposition to antichristian anointing, appears plainly by the words that go before, at verse 26, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." So the meaning is, ye need not be taught by man, or by those that are falsely anointed, as antichrist is; nor any otherwise need ye be taught by man, but as the same anointing, Christ, teacheth, and Christ teacheth by the public ministry of the word.

As for that place in 2 Peter i. 19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." Until; this *until*, doth not always denote an end of time, the end of that time to be then, which this *until* doth relate unto; for example, David saith, "I will wait upon the Lord till he shews mercy unto me." Would David wait upon the Lord no longer; when he had the mercy, would he not wait upon

the Lord then? Is that the meaning: I will wait upon the Lord *till* he shews mercy; that is, only till I have it: was he to make an end of his waiting upon the Lord when he had received the mercy? No, that is not the meaning; but saith he, I will wait on the Lord *till* he shews mercy; because the times in the interim are full of temptation and trouble; "I will wait upon the Lord till he shews mercy unto me." So the Lord saith to Christ, "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." Till! what no longer; is not Christ to sit for ever at the right hand of the Father? Yes, yet saith the Father, sit thou on my right hand *till;* not that then when the enemies of Christ are brought under, he shall sit no longer at his Father's right hand, for he shall sit there for ever. So here, Ye shall do well that ye take heed, "till the day-star arise in your hearts." Not that they should leave taking heed unto the word then, but because of the temptations, trials, and dark condition that they should be in before; he saith, Ye do well to take heed *until* the day-star arise in your hearts. So that thus now you see, there is nothing in these scriptures that do hold forth any such thing as this, any such sense and meaning as this objected.

But the apostle Paul saith, that the ordinances are only to continue till Christ come: for saith he, 1 Cor. ii. 26, "As often as ye eat of this bread, and drink this cup, ye shew forth the Lord's death till he come." Now he is come already by his Spirit to my soul, therefore this ordinance of the supper is to continue no longer to me, and so no other.

And do you think that in this sense Christ was not come in those times when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, was Christ come to none of the Corinthians by his Spirit? Read the 1st Epis. xii. "Unless I go, (saith Christ) the Comforter will not come." When Christ ascended, the Comforter came; in that sense therefore Christ was come in the apostles' time, yet they were under ordinances then.

But he was not come in such a degree of the Spirit as now he is.

No: either, then, you have a greater degree of the Spirit in regard of gifts or in regard of grace; if you have a greater degree of the Spirit in regard of gifts, why do you not speak with tongues, and work miracles, healing, &c., as they did?

and a greater degree of the Spirit in regard of grace you have not, for are you filled with all goodness? so were they too, Rom. xv. 14, yet they were under ordinances: or is the gospel come unto you in power, so that you are an example to those that believe? so were they too, 1 Thess. i. 7, 8, yet they were under ordinances: or do you live in God, and is your life hid with Christ in God? so it was with them too, Col. iii. 3, yet they were under ordinances. And will you venture the salvation of your soul upon this point, that you have a greater degree of the Spirit than they had in those times; which you must do if you cast up the ordinances upon that ground. But I suppose it will be granted that Christ's coming and appearing is all one: and if ye look into 2 Tim. iv. 1, his appearing and judging of the quick and dead go together. And is that time come? The angel saith, Acts i., that as the disciples saw him go away, so he should come again; and they saw him go away personally, therefore his coming is personally: but he is not yet come again personally, and therefore, according to the Scripture, the Lord's supper, and so ordinances which hold forth his death and first coming, are still to continue: why should it, therefore, enter into any of our hearts, that we are to lay aside the precious ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ our great Prophet?

But we do not deny the ordinances; we grant that the ordinances are still to continue; but they are lower dispensations, for the weak only, not for those that are strong.

No! not for those that are strong! why? were there none strong among the Romans, among the Thessalonians, among the Corinthians? Saith the apostle, "You that are strong, bear with those that are weak." And yet they were under ordinances. Aye, but they were not *so* strong, and had not *so* much of the Spirit, and were not *filled* with the Spirit. Stay then a little. First, We have it granted that the ordinances are to continue upon those that are weak. Secondly, That they are to continue upon those that are strong; but, it is said, that if a man be *so* strong, then not. Now, then, let any man shew that the ordinances are to continue upon those that are weak and upon those that are strong, but if a man come unto such a degree of strength, then they are not to continue upon him. Where is that degree mentioned in Scripture? Let any man shew that degree. The Scripture

doth speak the contrary; for it is said that Stephen was filled with the Holy Ghost, and yet he was made a deacon of the church, and was under ordinances. Filled with the Holy Ghost: here is a high degree, and yet under ordinances. And if that the Spirit of the Lord be therefore poured out in the fulness of it, that men may be enabled for to walk with God under his ordinances, then the fulness of the Spirit is no reason why ordinances should be laid aside. Now I pray look into the xxxvith chapter of Ezekiel, and you shall find that the Lord speaking concerning the new covenant, promiseth thus, "I will put my Spirit within you (at the 27th verse) and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk, &c. The word in the Hebrew signifies, to prepare, as we prepare and dress our meat, or as sacrifices were dressed for the offerings: so saith the Lord, I will put my Spirit within you, and will prepare you, or adapt and fit you for to walk in my statutes; the Spirit is therefore put into us, that we may be prepared and fitted to walk in God's statutes. And saith he, "Ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." I will not only give you my Spirit to keep my commandments and do the things I command you, but ye shall keep my judgments, and my statutes, and therefore I will give you my Spirit that ye may be fitted and thus adapted to walk in my statutes and keep my judgments. Yea, more plainly yet, in the xith of Ezekiel, where the Lord opening the new covenant, saith, at verse 19, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take away the stoney heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances," verse 20. Now I say, if the Spirit of the Lord be therefore given, that a man may be more fitted to walk with God under ordinances, then the fulness of the Spirit cannot be a reason why you should lay aside ordinances; but thus it is, the Spirit of the Lord is therefore given that we may walk with God in his statutes, and in his judgments, and keep them and hold them; yea, and if we look into the xth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we shall find that baptism with water is therefore administered, because men had received the Holy Ghost and the gifts thereof: verse 44, "Whilst Peter spake, the Holy

Ghost fell on them all which heard the word: (verse 45) on them was poured the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then said Peter (verse 47), Can any forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized." Now if this be reason why they were to have the ordinance pass upon them, because they had received the Holy Ghost in the gifts and pourings out of it, then our being filled with the Spirit is no reason why we should lay by the ordinances; but as we see plainly this is made a reason why they were to come under the ordinance, surely, therefore, the ordinances are still to continue, though we have the Spirit, and be filled therewith. Why, therefore, should we be so bold as to call them low, and poor, and weak, or fleshly dispensations, seeing that the Holy Ghost by Paul, 2 Cor. iii., calls the whole ministration of the gospel and dispensation thereof, Spirit, and glorious; upon this very account, because the ministration and dispensation of the gospel, as then used in Paul's time, were to abide and to continue, the ministration of Moses only to be done away?

But suppose these ordinances and appointments of Christ, this great Prophet, do still continue, and that we do and should use the same; yet we are not to use them because of any appointment or commandment without us, but because of the law within us.

This destroys all obedience on this side heaven; for what is obedience, but doing the will of God because it is commanded? The apostle Paul saith to the Thessalonians, 1st Epist. iv. 9, touching brotherly love, "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." Yet he presseth them thereunto from the commandment without them: verse 2, "For ye know what commandment we gave you," by the Lord Jesus, for this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, verse 3, and "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother," verse 6. Had not our Lord and Saviour Christ a law written within him? yet he obeyed, not only because of that law within, but also because of the commandment without him. Heb. x. 7, "Lo I come to do thy will, O God." Why? "For in the volume of the book it is written of me." And yet he saith, withal, Thy law is within my heart; I delight to do thy will.

And doth not the apostle James press obedience upon those believers whom he wrote unto, from the authority of God, and commandment without them? "For he that said, Do not commit adultery; said also, Do not kill," chap. ii. 11.

Had not the godly, believing Jews the law of grace written within them? yet how frequently doth the Lord press them, through the whole book of Deuteronomy, to obedience, because it was commanded, and from the commandment without them?

But all this doth not reach my scruple. I grant that the ordinances are still to continue, and should continue; yea, and that I am to submit to them because they are appointed and commanded: but then they must continue as they are appointed and commanded, according to the institution of the Lawgiver, and this great Prophet; but we read that antichrist shall lay waste, and trample upon the churches, ministry and ordinances of Christ. Now these are antichristian times; and therefore now the churches, ministry, and ordinances are all levelled, laid waste, and utterly spoiled; and therefore though they should, yet they do not continue, and so there are none for me to submit unto, wherein I should hearken to this great Prophet: when the apostle comes again, all shall be then restored; but for the present, through antichristian defilement, there are no public ordinances to submit unto.

Not so: we read indeed in Rev. xi., that the outward court of the temple shall be given to the Gentiles, the antichristian party; but the inward court, and the altar, and those that worship therein, shall be measured, ver. 1; and if the woman, which is the church, shall be nourished in the wilderness, and the two witnesses shall prophesy in sackcloth the whole time of antichrist; then the woman and the witnesses shall continue with ordinances, even in antichristian times. Now the whole time of the whore of Babylon and the beast, is forty-two months, Rev. xiii.; and all that time shall the woman be nourished, chap. xii., and the witnesses continue prophesying, chap. xi. And do we not read, that at the same time whilst the vassals of antichrist do receive his mark in their forehead and hand, Rev. xiii., that there are an hundred, forty and four thousand, who stand upon Mount Zion with their harps in their hand, having the mark of God and the Lamb in their

foreheads. Rev. xiv. In chap. xvi. the vial of the wrath of God is poured out upon the beast and the throne of the beast; but those angels who do pour out those vials mentioned in chap. xvi., come out of the temple, chap. xv.; indeed it is said, chap. xv. 8, that the temple shall be filled with smoke, and that none shall be able to enter into it; but it is with the smoke of God's glory, the sign of his presence in the temple: and though through the wickedness of the times no man shall be able to enter, that is, no considerable company shall be added to the churches of Christ then; yet this proves that there shall be a temple, for can the temple be filled with the smoke of God's glory, and yet no temple; or doth this argue that you have no house, because it is said, that no man could get in? this proves rather that you have an house; so here. And if antichrist, the man of sin, shall sit in the house of God, or rather upon the house of God, as Austin translates it, in regard of his tyranny; then there shall be a temple, and public worship, even under the most tyrannical oppressions of antichrist. Why therefore should any poor soul be deceived and say, There are no ordinances now? Surely the ordinances and appointments of Christ, this great Prophet, are and do still continue, wherein we are to hearken to him.

But in all this discourse you proceed in a way of reason, and these things are not to be beaten out or attained to by reason; no not by Scripture reason, but as God shall reveal them to us by his Spirit. If God do shine upon my soul, and reveal the necessity of ordinances to me, then I shall use them, else not. Sometimes, therefore, I do attend upon ordinances, sometimes I do not; I can use them, and I can forbear, or not use them; even as the Spirit doth reveal things, so do I.

But if any thing seem to be revealed which is contrary to the Scripture, there is no revelation of the Spirit, for saith our Saviour, "The Spirit shall take of mine, and shall shew it to you," John xvi. 14; and ver. 13, "He shall lead you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself," &c. And saith the Lord, "I will put my Spirit into you, that ye may keep my statutes and ordinances," Ezek. xi. Whatever therefore is revealed contrary to the word, is not of the Spirit. Now it is contrary to the word, as hath been proved, that we

should cast off or neglect ordinances; and therefore there can be no revelation of the Spirit for this: a delusion there may be, but no true revelation. Besides, our Lord and Saviour Christ hath so ordered things in the gospel, that if a man err, or be a heretic, he may be convinced. "A bishop, (or elder,) must be unreprovable," 1 Tit. vii. 9. "Holding fast that faithful word according to doctrine, that he also may be able to exhort with wholesome doctrine, and convince them that say against it." But how can any man be convinced but in a way of Scripture reason, the Spirit of the Lord joining therewith? If this were the way of Christ, that a man should say, I have a revelation for what I hold, the Spirit hath revealed it to me, and there is no more Scripture reasoning to be admitted about it; how should a man be convinced any more? But I say, Christ hath so ordered, that men should be convinced in case they err, and be out of the way; and therefore flying from Scripture reasonings to a way of mere revelation, cannot be right. And whereas you say, that you can use the ordinances, and you can forbear or not use them; this doth not heal the wound, but makes it greater: for if you can forbear the ordinances, or not use them, then you think there is no commandment upon you to use them, and so, as to yourself, you have cast them off; and if yet you do use them, when you think there is no commandment for the use of them, then are you superstitious, for what is superstition, but to worship God without a commandment? *Superstitio quasi super statutum:* superstition is that worship which is without God's commandment.

But suppose all this be true, what is the danger of renouncing or forsaking the ordinances then? We grant now after all this, that the ordinances of Christ are still to continue; we have seen it proved, and objections are answered: but is there any danger in renouncing and forsaking of them?

Yes, and much danger too: let me lay before you the mind of God herein; only first I distinguish, there is a difference between those that forsake the ordinances, as being under a temptation, and those that are not under a temptation. Possibly a good man may be tempted to it, and may lie under this temptation; for there is no sin that I know of, but a godly man may be tempted to it: possibly therefore, I say, a godly and a good man may be tempted to this, and may for

a time lie under this temptation. But now if a man not under a temptation shall forsake ordinances, when he hath tasted of the sweetness of them, and turn his back upon this great Prophet, the Lord Jesus, not submitting unto his appointments, see what the Scripture saith of him in this chapter: saith the Lord, "I will require it at his hand." And in Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, "Behold, I send an angel before you, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared; (this is Christ) beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him." And you know what the apostle saith, "If any man sin wilfully after he hath received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin," Heb. x. 26. Which speech, which dreadful speech, relates unto those that cast off the ordinances of Christ, after they have tasted of the sweetness of them; for the word is brought in with a *for*, "For if we sin wilfully." What doth he then speak in relation to? Read the words before: "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is: *for* if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth," &c. It comes in as relating to this matter; so that if men not under a temptation, shall wilfully throw up the ordinances of Christ, after they have tasted the sweetness of them, and of the ways of God by them, the Lord pronounceth this doom upon them. And if ye look into Heb. vi., ye shall find, that the apostle speaking concerning those that had left their principles, saith, that "it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." Ye read at verse 6, "If they shall fall away . . . . to renew them again unto repentance." But in the Greek and original, the word *if* is not, but it runs as the other words before do, thus: "For it is impossible (verse 4) for men having once been enlightened, and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and having been made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and having tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and having fallen away," not with an *if;* and having "fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." Who are these that he speaks of? Pray mark ver. 1, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and

of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment: for it is impossible." This same word *for*, shews that it relates unto those that he speaks of before, that had lost these principles. "For," saith he, it comes in as a reason, "For it is impossible to renew them again to repentance." If once they come to this pass, that they shall lose their principles, and deny the doctrines that are fundamental; the doctrines of the resurrection, and of eternal judgment, and the fundamental doctrine of ordinances; if they shall fall from these, and let go their principles, and not under a temptation, it is impossible, or very unlikely, utterly unlikely in a way of reason, that ever those souls should be renewed again; yet if we look into Matt. xxiv., ye shall find that such as these there shall be in the latter times, the times immediately before the coming of Christ: for saith our Saviour, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch as if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." How shall we know them, how are they characterized? why, they shall say of Christ, ver. 26, "Behold he is in the desert, behold he is in the secret chamber;" gone from the public ordinances, they are low and flesh; but, saith our Saviour, "Believe them not;" yet, Lord, how many do believe them.

But oh, what a sad condition are these poor creatures in; they may pretend living upon God immediately, but oh, what a sad condition are these poor souls in! I hope better things of you, and every of you, though I thus speak; yet I must here exhort you to keep close unto your principles, and to the appointments of the Lord Jesus this great Prophet. And I do exhort you, by the sweat of all your ministers, dead and living: by the love you bear to the precious name of God: by the love you bear to your own precious souls; hold and keep close to ordinances in these declining times; see where they are in purity and power, keep close to them. I am persuaded, that there is never a one of you, but would be a friend to Christ; says Christ, "Then are ye my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you." And can my heart tell me, that I am a friend to Christ if I cast off all his appointments, and all his ordinances? I am persuaded there is none of you, but desire to be the children

of God, "Wisdom is justified of her children;" Christ is the Wisdom of the Father; and if you be the children of Wisdom, you will justify Christ in all his appointments, but if Christ the Wisdom of the Father, shall give you such institutions and ordinances, and you cast them off, and say, They are low and fleshly, and the like: oh, how will you justify Christ the Wisdom of the Father? Wherefore I say, you that are professors, hold your hold in these declining times; and if you know any of your friends that are departed from the good ordinances of God, oh, stand and mourn, and lament over them and say, Alas, alas, my friend, how is his crown fallen from his head? If you have a neighbour that hath a monster born instead of a child, you will lament over your neighbour and say, My neighbour instead of a sweet child hath an ugly monster, with the head of a hog, and the ears of an ass; ah, my poor neighbour hath a monster born in his family. Why, this non-ordinance is England's monster; and as people carry monsters up and down to shew them; so in other countries they go up and down, and say, Come and behold the English monster; a thing never seen before, that professors should deny ordinances. And yet, good Lord, how many families in this kingdom hath this monster born there. Ah, will you not pray, weep, and lament over the families of your friends? Christian, hold thy hold, in these sad and declining times, hold thy hold.

But what shall we do then? These are deceiving and declining times, and there is nothing so dangerous, but by steps we may be drawn into it; what shall we do, that in these times we may be kept close to ordinances; that we may never turn our backs upon this great Prophet the Lord Jesus Christ, but receive, acknowledge, submit unto his appointments, and therein hearken unto him?

Ye know that there is a concatenation, a linking together of ordinances, and dispensations: as of sins and of graces, so of ordinances and dispensations; take away one link, and the whole chain is broken; open but one gap in the hedge, and a way is made unto all the beasts. Austin writing upon John, tells us a story of a certain man, that was of an opinion, that the devil did make the fly, that God did not make a fly, but the devil did make a fly; saith one to him then,

If the devil did make the flies, then the devil did make the worms, and God did not make the worms neither, for the flies are living creatures as well as the worms: True, said he, I grant it, the devil did make the worms too. But, said the other, if the devil did make the worms, and not God; then the devil did make the birds, for the worms are living creatures as well as the birds: True, said he, I grant it, the devil did make the birds, and God did not make the birds. Then, saith the other, if God did not make the birds, but the devil made the birds, then the devil made the beasts; for the birds are living creatures as well as the beasts: True, I grant it, said he, the devil did make the beasts too. Then, said the other again, if the devil did make the beasts, the devil made man, for the beast is a living creature as well as man: True, said he, I grant it, the devil made man. Thus saith Austin, by denying God in the fly, he came to deny God in man, and to deny the whole creation; by letting a little hold go, to deny the whole workmanship of God in the creation. So I say here, if you let go but a little in this spiritual creation, you may lose all. Whensoever therefore, you have a question upon your own soul concerning any one of the ordinances, then know, you are upon your trial, upon your good behaviour; and therefore then go to the Lord, and say, Lord keep me now, for if I let go one, I am in danger to lose all.

If you would be kept close to ordinances, and hearken to Christ this great Prophet, in acknowledging, receiving, submitting unto his appointments; then take heed that you be not dead, dull and formal under them; but improve them, grow and increase under them; otherwise you will say, Alas, I get but little good under these; were these the ordinances, appointments, and institutions of Jesus Christ, I should profit by them, but I get little or no good at all under them, therefore it is a vain thing for me to wait any longer, I will attend no longer upon these. If a rich man put out a child to nurse, and he send clothes for the child, or give money unto the nurse for his child, and she takes the money and lays it out upon her own, or takes those clothes and puts them upon the back of her own child, the father will surely fetch away his child quickly from that nurse. The Lord hath given us ordinances, and given us good affections, and if we lay out

those affections upon the world, upon our own brats, then will the Lord say, I will take away my child, my ordinances from that soul, or I will take away that soul from my ordinance. Labour, therefore, to profit, grow and increase under them.

If you would keep close unto these appointments, and not stop your ears unto the voice of this great Prophet, then have a very watchful eye upon those principles that walk abroad in the world, which though they have a truth and goodness at the bottom, yet, notwithstanding, being not well digested or understood, are dangerous guides in these dark times. For instance, it is an ordinary principle that now walks abroad, that a godly man doth not sin, a believer sins not: the thing is true, for the apostle saith, "He that is born of God sins not," that is, irrecoverably, "for the seed of God abides in him." But it is not true in regard of the act of sin; for the same apostle says, "If any man saith he sins not, he is a liar." Again, It is a common principle that now walks abroad, that the Spirit of God in me is not to be tried by any thing without me. It hath a good sense, for the testimony of the Spirit hath a sufficiency in itself as to the matter of testimony; yet, notwithstanding, it is not true in regard of the Scripture, for the Spirit of God in me is to be tried by the Scripture without me. Again, It is a common principle that walks now abroad, that the coming in of a particular word upon one's heart, the impression of the word upon one's heart is to be the rule of action: a word came, and therefore I must do such a thing. The thing is true in a sense; for if a man be in a strait between two lawful things, and a word come and be set upon the heart, that impression is enough for to cast the business: but it is not true in all respects, for it is not the bare coming in of the word, but the Lord's command that is to be the rule of my action. Again, It is a common principle that walks now abroad, that the ordinances are for the enjoyment of God. This is true, they are for the enjoyment of God; when do we enjoy God more, when doth God let out himself more than under ordinances? but though it be true, yet it is not all the truth, for the ordinances are not given only for the enjoyment of God, but for us to give a visible testimony, and to bear witness before the world of our obedience to God. Now many such principles as these there

are abroad in the world: but if you take them up and do not understand them, I dare boldly say, you will be carried from all ordinances presently. As, now, suppose I be of an opinion that I, who am a believer, cannot sin; then, it follows, if I go to ordinances, well; if I do not go to ordinances I do not sin: here is ordinances gone upon this principle.

So, again, if I be of this opinion, that the coming in of a particular word upon one's heart is to be the rule of my action; I am in a doubt, now, and a strait, whether I should attend upon ordinances or no; then comes a word, it may be Satan throws it in, or mine own memory reacheth it in, and the word tells me I am to attand upon ordinances no longer; then farewell ordinances. Again, Suppose I be of this opinion, that the Spirit of God within me is not to be tried by any thing without me; then I think the Spirit and word within me saith, Wait upon God no longer in these lower dispensations, do not attend upon ordinances any longer; and that is to be tried by nothing without me, not by the Scripture, and thus ordinances are gone too. Again, If I be of this judgment, that ordinances are given us only for the enjoyment of God, then, think I, I can enjoy God in private, and ordinances are only for the enjoyment of God, what need I, therefore, attend upon ordinances any longer? Thus, I say, follow these principles to the head, and you will certainly forsake ordinances. Wherefore, you that are godly, look to your principles; do not take a principle, and not understand it, but look well into it, thus shall you be kept.

But suppose that I be kept to ordinances, institutions and appointments of Christ, this great Prophet, and I do hear him, that is, I do receive, acknowledge and submit unto his appointments; possibly a man may do this and miscarry to all eternity: what shall I do that I may so receive, acknowledge and submit unto Christ's appointments, that I may hear him effectually, hear him savingly?

You know that Christ our great Prophet, doth especially look at the inward man; for he is God, and a Spirit, and minds the Spirit. Though he will have every letter of his commandment to be observed, yet he lays the great stress and the emphasis upon the spiritual part of the commandment. As now, "It hath been said (saith he), Thou shalt not commit adultery;" but, mark where he lays the empha-

sis, "But I say unto you, Thou shalt not look upon a woman to lust after her." Here this great Prophet lays the emphasis and stress upon the spiritual part. So saith he, "It hath been said to you of old, Thou shalt not kill;" but mark where he lays the emphasis, "But I say unto you, ye shall not be angry." Would you therefore so hearken to this great Prophet, as ye may hear him effectually and savingly; observe where he lays the emphasis in the giving of the commandment, and there do you lay the emphasis in your obedience. Doth the Lord say, "It hath been said of old, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say:" is the Lord Christ's "I say" written upon the spiritual part of the commandment? then through the grace of God shall my "I say" for obedience be pitched upon the spiritual part also.

The law you know was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Christ. The law and the ten commandments was given by Moses, but no grace to keep them. But Christ our great Prophet, doth not only give forth his appointments, but he gives grace to keep them; do I, therefore, or do any of you stand poring upon the letter of the commandment, and not look upon the grace, the assisting grace for to keep the commandment? Herein I hearken to Moses. But do I so look upon the commandment and appointments of Christ, as that withal I have an eye to grace, assisting grace, and say, I shall have grace too to keep this commandment? Then do I hearken unto Christ Jesus, this great Prophet. Look therefore, I say, as well to grace as to the letter of the commandment.

The more you have the exercise of faith in the observance of Christ's institutions, appointments, and ordinances; the more effectually and savingly you hear him. Faith is a saving hearing of this great Prophet. There is a great difference between an instituted and a natural means. Physicians and physic are natural means of health; but the beholding of the brazen serpent was an instituted means for recovery, not a natural means. Now if we go to the use of natural means, we are to use our faith; much more when we go to the use of instituted means: and the appointments of the Lord Jesus Christ are instituted means; therefore when we come to them, we must come with our hearts full of faith, exercising much faith when we come to them. You find the

apostle, writing unto the Thessalonians, makes this sign of election, 1 Thess. i. 4: "Knowing, brethren, your election of God;" how so? "for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power." Why *our* gospel; why doth he call it their gospel, and not the gospel? For "our gospel," because he speaks of the gospel as it was preached by them in the ministry, in the dispensation thereof. "For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power:" it came in power, and not in word; therefore saith he, hereby it appears that ye are elected. Would you know whether you are elected or no? hereby it appears, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power." But how may it appear that it came in power? At ver. 6, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord; having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." Here is faith, faith exercised here. So I say, it shall be an argument to you, that ye are chosen and precious, when as you mingle the appointments of Christ with your faith. Come unto Christ's appointments, but oh, come believing, come believing. It may be some poor soul will say, Oh, but I cannot believe; I can keep close to ordinances, but I cannot believe, I cannot receive them so.

Why, but if thou dost leave off thy parley with Satan in the time of temptation merely upon Christ's command, thou dost hear him, and hear him effectually. For suppose now that a man's son be treating, in a way of marriage, with another man's daughter, and the father doth not like the match; the father comes unto the son, and saith, I would not have thee, son, to marry there, but I have a match for you in such a place, such a woman that is fit for you every way; son, I would not have you go on where you do. Then saith the son, Father, I am willing with all my heart to hearken to you, but my affections are not in mine own hand, I cannot love where I list; as for the person you point at, and the motion you make, my affections do not yet come unto it, but this I will do, sir, I will presently knock off where I am, and I will strive to love where you would have me. Doth not this child hear his father now, in that he knocks off, and will go no more to the person that he was in parley with, although for the present he cannot love the person his father would have him love? So here, the Lord would

have us believe, and cast our souls upon Jesus Christ, and love him; but, saith the soul, I cannot believe in Christ, I cannot love him; yet this I will do, Lord, I am in parley with Satan upon such and such terms, I will knock off with him: this being done is a hearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, this great Prophet, and it is an effectual hearing too. Thus we are to hear this great Prophet, and thus you have heard that ye are to hear him, and how ye are to hearken to him. What now remains, but that you up and be doing. Whosoever you are that hear the word of the Lord this day, either you are godly or you are ungodly. If you be ungodly, "hear, and your souls shall live." Hear this great Prophet, and your souls shall live. If you be godly hear this Prophet, for saith he, "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me." It was the speech of that holy, eminent person Mr. Brightman, If Christ be not your Prophet, he shall never be your Priest: if Christ may not be your Prophet to teach you, guide you, and direct you, he shall never be your Priest to satisfy God's wrath for you. Now, therefore, as you desire that the Lord Jesus should be your Priest, to satisfy the wrath of God for you; oh, let him be your Prophet; hearken to this Prophet, to his institutions, appointments, and keep close to them.

And, to end all, take but one scriptural encouragement, it is at Isa. xlviii. 17: "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel (this is Christ), I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." Christ is our teacher. Aye, but we have many teachers; oh, that I could meet with that teacher once that could teach me to profit by all that I have heard. So Christ teacheth: "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." Well, but what is my duty then? Your duty is to hear him; at verse 18, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments." But what good shall I get thereby? "Then had thy peace been as a river;" not as a drop of water in a glass that is soon dried up: in a river there is much water, and in a river, you know, there is fresh water: now saith the Lord, Do but hearken unto this teacher, this great Prophet, and the peace of thy conscience shall be like a river, full of peace shall thy conscience be; and as the

water of the river is always fresh, so shall thy peace of conscience be; whereas now thou art troubled in conscience, and hast no peace within, do but hearken unto this great Prophet as distinct from Moses, and thou shalt have peace within as a river, full and fresh. But what matter for peace unless I have grace withal? If I do hearken unto him shall I have grace too? See what follows: "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Thy righteousness and thy holiness shall be as a sea, thy peace as a river, but thy grace shall be more, as the sea that knows no bottom so shall thy righteousness be. Who doth not desire these two, peace and grace? If there be ever a poor soul in all the congregation that is troubled in conscience, and labours under conscience burdens, hearken, then, and hear the Lord Jesus; go, I say, to him, and stand waiting on him as the great Prophet, as distinct from Moses. I do not say hearken to Moses, that speaks conditionally, but hearken to Christ, that speaks grace absolutely; "I will write my law in thy heart;" that is upon no condition. Soul, go and hearken to this great Prophet and thou shalt certainly have peace; yea, the peace shall be as a river, and thou shalt have fulness of peace, and freshness of peace: that whereas now thy soul is mudded, and thy conscience troubled, and thou goest under many temptations, thou shalt then have thy conscience clear, and thy soul cleansed: and whereas now thou labourest under much corruption, then shall the righteousness be as the waves of the sea, thou shalt have grace and abundance of grace; wherefore what I say to one I say to all, Hear, hear, hear and your souls shall live.

SERMON VIII.

GRACE AND LOVE BEYOND GIFTS.

PREACHED BEFORE THE LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON, JULY 22, 1649.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THOMAS ANDREWS, LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON, WITH THE ALDERMEN HIS BRETHREN.

ACCORDING to your command, I have presented these notes to your view, which were once delivered unto your ear and heart. I have joined another Sermon therewith, pleading for our submission to Christ in the way of his ordinances: the argument of the one is a friend to the other *stantque caduntque simul*. The sweet enjoyment of ordinances together, is a great help to our love. We can hardly cool in our love to one, but we shall abate in our love to the other: swelling gifts despise ordinances and neglect love. This sermon, therefore, of grace, love and gifts, is to call upon our gifts, that they take not the wall of our graces; the other sermon of ordinances, is to call upon our graces to submit unto Christ's appointments: for gifts thrive best when they live under grace, and grace thrives best when it lives under ordinances. Now the girdle of all the ordinances is the Lord's day, which doth surround and combine all the rest. May it please the magistrate to be a friend to this good day, Christ will surely be a friend to him in an evil day. You cannot make people sanctify this day, for the hearts of men are not in your hands; but you may restrain them much from public profaning this day, for the tongues, hands, and feet of men are much in your hands. Job is said to sanctify his sons, Job i , because he commanded them to sanctify themselves, used all means for their sanctification, and prayed for them. So, though the magistrate cannot sanctify the people as to the infusion of grace, yet by his prayers and gracious endeavours of love, mixed with some power, as just occasion requires, he also may be said to sanctify them. The magistrate is the people's father, and the people are the magistrate's children. Now, therefore, as it was said of Job and his children, so let it be said of you and your children in the generations to come; And it was so, that when the days of their feasting, or rather sporting, were come, (for so the Lord's days have been too truly called of late,) the magistrate sent and sanctified them. Thus shall our decayed love to God, his truth, his ordinances and his children, revive and be advanced again; and thus shall the blessing of the house of Obed-edom (who received the ark) rest upon you and your families, which shall be the prayer of your servant in the work of the gospel,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

Yarmouth, Sept. 10, 1649.

"*But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way.*"—1 COR. xii. 31.

OF all the churches of Christ which we read of in the New

Testament, the church of Corinth seems to have abounded most with spiritual gifts; and as they did abound most in them, so they did most abuse them. All had not those spiritual gifts, some had: those that had them, despised those that had them not; and those that had them not, envied those that had them. The apostle Paul, therefore, that he might heal this distemper, doth acquaint them with the excellency of those gifts, and the end for which they were appointed. Concerning the excellency of gifts, he tells them in the beginning of this chapter, that they are all from the Spirit. "There are diversities of gifts (ver. 4) but the same Spirit: there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." Ver. 8, "To one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit." And concerning the end for which they were appointed, he tells them, at verse 7, that they are given to profit withal: "But the ministration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Now both the excellency of gifts, and the end for which they were appointed, he doth illustrate by a similitude drawn from the natural body: that as in the natural body there are many members, and those, having several gifts, are helpful to one another; and the eye cannot say unto the foot, I have no need of thee: so in the body of Christ, all members, with their several gifts, are to be helpful to one another, and one member of Christ cannot say to the other, "I have no need of thee." For, at ver. 26, "Whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." Now, at ver. 27, saith he, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." But how do these members come, or attain unto these gifts? Ver. 28, "God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healing." But have all men these gifts? No. Are all apostles? At ver. 29, "Are all prophets, are all teachers, are all workers of miracles, have all the gifts of healing?" &c. But may we not all desire gifts then? Yes. "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way." What way is that? If you look into this chap. xii., it is the way of humility, grace and holiness. If you look down into chap.

xiii., it is the way of love; for, saith he, in ver. 1, "Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." So then take the words as they look upwards and downwards, relating unto all the former parts of chap. xii., and unto chap. xiii., and you have this observation or doctrine:

Though the way of gifts, spiritual gifts, be an excellent way, and much to be desired; yet the way of grace and love is a more excellent way, and most to be desired.

For the opening of which truth, three things:

First, That there is a way of gifts distinct from the way of grace, and a way of grace distinct from the way of gifts.

Secondly, That there is much excellency in these spiritual gifts; that the way of gifts is a very excellent way, and much to be desired.

Thirdly, That the way of grace and of love is yet a more excellent way, and more to be desired.

First, I say, there is a way of gifts distinct from the way of grace and holiness, χαρις and χαρισμα are distinct: all the saints and people of God have grace, but all have not these gifts. Grace is that excellency whereby we are made like to God in Christ; gifts are that excellency whereby we are made able to do service for God in the church of God. By grace, say the schools, we do *bene agere*, we do work well; and by gifts we do *expedite agere*, we do act more facly, easily, expeditely. A man may have a gift in prayer, and yet no grace in prayer; a man may have a gift in preaching and exercising, yet no grace under it; a man may have the gift of faith, (though "I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I have nothing;" he speaks of the gift of faith); a man may have, I say, the gift of faith, and yet not the saving grace of faith. So that plainly there is a way of gifts distinct from the way of grace, and a way of grace and holiness distinct from the way of gifts.

Secondly, But what excellency is there then in gifts, and in the way of gifts?

Much, very much; they are called πνευματικα, in chap. xiv. 1, "Desire spiritual gifts." In chap. xii. they are said to be of the Spirit, by the Spirit, from the Spirit. And if you look into Acts x., you shall find that they are called, "The

very Spirit," or the Holy Ghost; at ver. 44, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them which heard the word, and they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, because that upon the Gentiles was also poured out the gifts of the Holy Ghost," In one verse it is said, "They received the Holy Ghost;" and in the next, they "received the gift of the Holy Ghost." "For they heard them speak with tongues and magnifying God: then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost?" Yet notwithstanding, before, it is said, the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them. So that here the gift of the Holy Ghost is called the Holy Ghost. And so I take that place in Heb. vi. to be understood, concerning wicked men that do fall away: it is said, "They are made partakers of the Holy Ghost;" that is, the gifts of the Holy Ghost: for in those times the Holy Ghost appeared by sensible gifts, and it is usual to put the sign for the thing signified. But now, that these gifts should be raised up to such a title as this, to be called the Holy Ghost, it argues that there is a great deal of excellency in these gifts, in spiritual gifts.

They are the purchase of Christ, the fruits of his ascension; some of those talents which that great Lord left unto his servants, when he went into a far country; they are better than all gold and silver in the world, for if you had all the gold and silver of both Indies, you had but natural gifts, but these gifts are spiritual.

It is an excellent thing for a man to be able to do good to others: this is the end of gifts; they are, as the schools speak, *in ordine ad alium*, they are given for others' good; they are to profit with, saith the apostle. The sun is an excellent creature; why? because he doth good to others: so, many are, by these spiritual gifts, enabled to do good to others; they are those vessels, which grace and holiness being embarked in, is transported into others' souls. Though there be excellent commodities in other countries, yet if you have not shipping to transport them, you are not the better for them; therefore you say, there is a great use of shipping, thereby such and such rare commodities are transported: so, by these gifts, that grace and goodness that grows in one

man's heart, is transported into another's, carried into another's soul. "He hath given gifts," saith the apostle, "for the edifying of the body of Christ," Eph. iv. If you cannot reach a book off the shelf, you take a stool, and standing upon that stool, you are able to reach down the book: the stool are these gifts; grace alone many times cannot reach down such a notion in divinity, as it is able to do by the help of gifts. *Dona dantur in adjutorium gratia:* gifts are given for the help of grace, they are the handmaids of grace, and they bring forth sweetly upon the knees of grace.

Again, That must needs be excellent, that is able to add a further excellency unto that which is the most excellent. You say ordinarily, that if a worse thing be added unto a better, the better is defiled; as if water be added unto wine, the wine is corrupted; if lead be added unto silver, the silver is defiled; if silver be added unto gold, the gold is debased; and so the better is defiled by the worser. But now grace is the greatest excellency in the world, yet add gifts unto grace, and grace itself is made the more excellent and beautiful: for as the temple did sanctify the gold, but the gold did beautify the temple; so though grace do sanctify gifts, yet gifts do beautify grace. Now grace being the greatest beauty under heaven, and gifts putting a further beauty upon that which is the most beautiful, what doth this argue, but that there is abundance of excellency and beauty in spiritual gifts.

Thirdly, But then, if there be such an excellency in gifts, in spiritual gifts, wherein is grace and love more excellent? Wherein lies the excellency of grace and love, beyond the excellency of gifts?

Concerning love first. Love is not an empty thing, the voice and sound of love is not an uncertain sound, or an empty voice; but saith the apostle here, 1 Cor. xiii., "Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." A man's heart may be purged from grosser sins, and he may be garnished with parts and gifts, and yet his soul left empty for Satan to return into again, as you read in that xiith of Matthew; but grace and love is a filling thing, yea, saith the apostle, chap. xiii. 8, "Love (or charity) never fails," but it continues, it is that garment that never waxeth old; but gifts do, and are soon threadbare. Though these gifts are

fine sweet flowers, yet therewithal the mower filleth not his hand; a gracious heart cannot be satisfied with gifts alone, gifts alone are not able to satisfy, love and grace doth. But wherein doth love work beyond gifts? Saith the apostle here, I will tell you, chap. xiii. 4, "Love is not easily provoked;" better read thus, Love is slow to anger; parts and gifts are not so. But a man may be slow to anger, and yet not kind and bountiful. True, but "love is kind," or bountiful, as the word bears it, gifts are not so. The apostle speaks of the effects of love in opposition to parts and gifts all along. Love, saith he, is slow to anger, and is kind, or bountiful. Aye, but though a man be kind or bountiful, yet notwithstanding he may envy at the good of others. True, if he have parts and gifts only; but love, true love, that envies not. Aye, but though a man do not envy at the good of others, yet he may not consider the wants of others. True, but love will, for in the next words, "Charity (or love) vaunteth not," so you read it, but according to the greek, rather, "Love is not light," or inconsiderate, but considers, and weigheth all things. Aye, but though you do all this, yet notwithstanding a man may be proud when he hath done. True, if he have gifts alone, but "love is not puffed up," is not swelled or blown and filled with wind as the bellows are; at the 5th verse, saith he, "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." This may be understood two ways, saith Peter Martyr; love will do no unseemly thing, or, love counts nothing unseemly for the person loved. Our Saviour Christ washed his disciples' feet: one would think it an unseemly thing for the Lord and Master to do this for the servants, but he loved them, and love counts nothing unseemly for the person loved. Judas comes and betrays his Master with a kiss, this was an unseemly thing; Judas had parts and gifts, but he had not love, and therefore he did an unseemly thing. Love doth not behave itself unseemly, that is, it doth no unseemly thing, and yet counts nothing unseemly for the person loved. "It seeks not her own," in the next words, but the good of the person loved. "Love is not easily provoked;" the words rather to be read thus, "Is not easily embittered," or is not sharp, doth not speak bitter language; gifts and parts will. "Love thinks no evil;" that follows: and at verse 6, "It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the

truth." "It rejoiceth not in iniquity;" the word is *αδικια*,* injustice: "It rejoiceth not in injustice, but it doth rejoice with the truth;" *συγχαιρει δε αληθεια*;† so the words are to be read, and that is thus: If a man be oppressed, love cannot rejoice in his oppression; but if a man be freed and delivered from his oppression, and the truth heard and known, love rejoiceth with such a man when the truth is discovered; it rejoiceth not in injustice, but rejoiceth with the truth when that comes to light. Well, but suppose all this, yet notwithstanding a man may labour under some sinful infirmities, &c., what will love do then? "Love beareth all things," verse 7. But the words should be otherwise translated; for as you read them, "Love beareth all things;" what difference will there be between that clause and the latter of that verse, "Endureth all things, it bears all things," &c.?‡ Here is no difference. The words, therefore, should be read thus: "It covereth all things." So the greek word, *στεγω*, signifies properly, to cover: it is the same word that is used ordinarily in the New Testament to that purpose. Mark ii. 4, "They uncovered the roof of the house," &c. The roof, or the covering, is the same word that is used here, and so, "love covereth all things;" though men have many infirmities, yet true love will cover them all: and "it believeth all things;" though a man have done that which is evil in itself, yet love believes he had a good intention in the doing of it, for it believeth all things; and though a man go very far in sin, yet if another have love, he hopeth that God will bring him back again, for "love hopeth all things, it covers all things, it believeth all things, it hopeth all things;" and if another do me wrong, if I have love I shall bear that too, for "love endureth all things." But, now, will gifts and parts do these things? Surely no; gifts and parts will not bear all things, cover all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things. Aye, but love doth, and love will, and therefore here is a greater excellency in the way of love than in the way of gifts; and if love do outshoot gifts in their own bow, then certainly there is a greater excellency in love than in all gifts. Now if you look into 1 Cor. viii., you shall find

* Ου χαιρει επι τη αδικια. † Συγχαιρει δε τη αληθεια.

‡ Δωμα et στεγη ita distinguuntur quod δωμα sit summa edium pars στεγη ver notat tabulatum του δωματος.

that it is said concerning love, that it edifies;" knowledge puffeth up, but charity (or love) edifies." Knowledge, that is, the gift of knowledge, doth puff us up. The end of gifts is edification; it is the proper work of gifts to edify; yet, saith the apostle, love edifies; comparing love and gifts together, he shews that love edifies rather than gifts. Now, I say, if that love do thus outshoot gifts in their own bow, then certainly there is a great deal more excellency in love than in all gifts, though they be never so great. Thus concerning love.

And concerning grace and holiness in the general. Grace and holiness is the proper and natural effect of the Spirit, as I may so speak. Gifts are, *opus ad extra*. You shall find that voluntary and rational agents have a twofold effect: a man begets a child like himself, that is a natural effect; then he makes a stool, or a hat, or a ship, this is not a natural effect, this is an artificial effect: so God the Father, he made the world, there is *opus ad extra:* but he begat his Son, and the Son is of the Father, so the Holy Ghost hath a twofold effect. The proper and the natural effect of the Holy Ghost is grace, but the *opus ad extra* is gifts. Grace and holiness is the proper effect of the Holy Ghost, and therefore the apostle Paul speaking of love, joy, peace, and of other particular graces, saith, they are "the fruits of the Spirit," Gal. v. 22. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith," &c.

Again, Sin and corruption will not so easily plant upon grace as upon gifts; pride and corruption will more easily plant upon gifts than upon grace; gifts do sooner gather filth and sooner rust than grace doth. Saith the apostle in that place I named even now. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifies;" he speaks of knowledge as of a gift; now saith he, "Knowledge, that puffeth up." But how can knowledge, or how can any spiritual gift puff one up? Can that which is the fruit or the effect of the Spirit of God puff one up? No, but occasionally it can, and it will occasionally. So, you will say, grace itself doth, for a man may be proud of his grace as well as he may be proud of his gifts. It is very true. I remember that speech of Mr. Fox, Sometimes, said he, I get hurt by my graces, and sometimes I get good by my sins; for by my sins I am made more humble, and by my grace I am

made more proud. It is true, occasionally a man may be proud of and puffed up by his very graces, but there is yet that in true grace itself that will suppress pride, grace being contrary to sin; as for gifts, though they be divers from sin, yet they are not contrary unto sin, and so cannot suppress sin, as grace can do, that is contrary thereunto; for one contrary doth destroy the other. I express it thus: a man may be proud of his clothes, and he may be proud of his graces, but there is not that in his clothes which will suppress his pride; there is nothing in clothes that is contrary unto pride, but in grace there is. So a man may be proud of his gifts, and he may be proud of his graces, but there is not that in gifts that is so contrary unto pride as there is in grace; there is that in grace that is directly contrary unto sin and pride: I say, therefore, that pride and corruption cannot so easily plant and grow upon grace itself as it can upon gifts, and therefore there is a greater excellency in grace, and the way of grace and holiness, than in the way of gifts. Though a man have never so little grace, and have no gifts, yet he gives no offence, is not scandalous; but if a man have all gifts, and have no grace, how many offences doth he fall into, and how scandalous is he? let experience speak.

Though a man have never such great parts and gifts, yet if he have not grace withal, he may go to hell, and perish to all eternity, for by his gifts he is not united unto Jesus Christ, for by his gifts he is not made the child of God, for by his gifts he is not estated in the covenant of grace. You know what our Saviour saith: "Many shall say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and have done many wonderful works?" these are the effects of gifts; "and he shall say unto them, Depart, I know you not." But saith the apostle concerning grace and love, "I hope better things of you, and such as accompany salvation, for God is not unmindful to forget your labour of love" that accompanies salvation. You see how it is with children that are playing together in the day, if they be playing abroad, and children of divers parents, when night comes, one child goes to his father, and the other unto his father; they are very like, it may be, and their clothes are alike, and when they are playing together abroad, you cannot say whose child this is, or whose child that is, but when night comes, the fa-

ther then comes unto his child and saith, Come home, my child, come in at doors, and if the other offers to go in there, No, child, you must go home to your father; so while we are living, grace and gifts are mingled together, some men have gifts and some men have graces, and they look very like. Ah, but when night comes, and when death comes, then God the Father, he saith to those that have grace, Come, my children, enter in; but if those that have gifts only come, he sends them away: No, you must go to your father, it is not your gifts make you my children; by grace you are my children, but not by gifts, and therefore home to your father, I am none your father, home unto your own father; thus will the Lord speak when night comes: yea, and if a man do go to hell and perish, the more gifts he hath, the deeper will he sink into hell; as it is with a man that is in the water, sinking in the water, the more he is laden with gold, the more he sinks, and as he is sinking if he hath any time to cry out, he saith, Oh, take away these bags of gold, these bags of gold will sink me, they will undo me: so I say, these golden parts and golden gifts they will undo men; when men come to hell, and shall perish, the more golden gifts and parts they have had, the deeper they shall sink in hell; parts and gifts will never save a man from the wrath to come, aye, but grace, and love, and holiness under Christ will; surely therefore there is an excellency in the way of grace and of love, beyond the way of gifts: though the way of gifts be an excellent way, and much to be desired, yet the way of grace and of love is a more excellent way, and most of all to be desired.

By way of application then methinks this doctrine looks wishly upon those that have gifts, upon those that have none, or very weak, and it looks wishly upon us all.

It looks wishly upon those that have parts and gifts, and it calls upon you all for to bless the Lord. Hath the Lord led you in a way of gifts? He hath led you in an excellent way, for the way of gifts is an excellent way. Is it not a great mercy for a man to be able to do good to others, and to save another man's soul, to have a hand to pull others out of everlasting burnings? Herein man seems to go beyond the angels, for the angels are ministering spirits, but men are called saviours, "Others save with fear, pulling them out of

the fire." And hath the Lord led you in a way of gifts, and given you gifts to do good to others? Such a hand he hath given to you, surely therefore you have cause for ever to bless the Lord.

But though the Lord, through his grace, hath led me in this way of gifts, I fear I have nothing but gifts, I fear that they are gifts alone, and not grace withal; had I gifts and graces too, I should bless the Lord indeed, but I fear it is nothing but gifts.

For answer, it is possible that a man that hath grace may think he hath nothing but gifts; it is possible for a man that hath only gifts to think that his gifts are graces. But would you know the difference between gifts and graces as they are in *subjecto*, as they are in a particular person? for the difference between them as they are in themselves, I have shewn you in the beginning. Then thus, the faculty you know is distinguished by the act, and the act by the object, *potentia distinguitur per actum, et actus per objectum*, saith philosophy. If a man have gifts only, he is exercised most about a gifting object; if grace, then about a gracious object; and therefore if you look into Scripture, you shall find, that grace and faith fall in with a crucified Christ, "I desire to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified," saith faith and grace. But now gifts coming in by the ascension of Jesus Christ, "He hath ascended on high, he hath given gifts to men," they are conversant especially about ascensions and glories, but a crucified Christ is a mean and fleshly thing in their eyes.

Again, They differ in their nature; for gifts, as I may so speak, are a dead grace, and grace is a living gift; dead men are free among the dead, and living men love to converse with the living; grace is a living quality, and therefore it prizeth living saints, and things are most savoury that come from a living hand; but gifts in comparison are a dead thing, and therefore prizeth dead notions, and dead persons; and things relish best which come from a dead hand, as books and the like; why? because gifts being dead, themselves are free among the dead.

Again, They differ also in their disposition, for grace and holiness is contented with the simplicity of the gospel, gifts are not contented therewithal, and therefore you shall ob-

serve that the Corinthians, who excelled in gifts, adulterated the gospel with their swelling words; the Galatians adulterated the doctrine of the gospel, and mingled the doctrine of the gospel with justification by works; and the Corinthians mingled the words of the gospel with their own swelling language; they had gifts and they were not contented with the simplicity of the gospel, aye, but grace is. You see how it is with a child that comes into a corn-field, he is mightily taken with the blue or red weeds, or a company of daisies, but now when a man comes, the husbandman comes, he looks at the corn, and is not so much taken with the blue or red weeds, or the daisies that grow there, but is taken with the corn itself. So now take a man that hath gifts only, and bring him to a sermon, or to a prayer, and if there be any fine expressions, any daisies, he is much taken with them, he prizeth and magnifieth them, and he hangs on them; but now bring a man that hath grace, to prayer, or to a sermon, and he looks at the corn, he doth not look at the daisies so much, but at the spirituality and the power of those things that are there delivered. They differ in their disposition.

Again, They differ also in their effects; grace hath a good hand at suffering as well as at doing; gifts have a very good hand at doing, but they have an ill hand at suffering; they are given to profit withal, they are given to act, and to do with; but when you come to suffer, gifts, I say, though they have a good hand at doing, they have a very ill hand at suffering: but now grace hath as good a hand at suffering as it hath at doing.

Again, They differ also in their abatement and in their quenching: if a man have grace and fall into sin, that sin will hinder and quench the former actings of his grace; he cannot act now as he did act before; therefore saith the apostle, "Quench not the Spirit:" but if a man have gifts only, and no grace, and he fall into sin, that sin hinders not his actings, he can pray as he did, and he can converse as he did, his actings are not so much hindered or quenched thereby; as it is with a candle, if it be only painted upon a board, and you put it into the water, that is not quenched thereby; why? because it is a dead candle, it is not a living candle: but now come and take a living candle, a burning candle, and put that into the water, and that is quenched: why? be-

cause it is a living candle, it is a burning candle: so now, take a man that hath gifts only, and let him fall into sin, and his gifts are not quenched with his sin; why? because he is but a dead candle, a painted candle, and so he can pray as well, and converse as well, though he fall into sin: but now, a man that hath grace in truth, and more than gifts, if he fall into sin, oh, he cannot act as he did act before, he hath not the same face towards God as he had before: thus, I say, they differ in their abatements. And therefore now, whosoever you are that make this objection, and fear that you have nothing but gifts, and not grace; as it is the scruple of many christians, Oh, I fear, saith one, I have nothing but gifts, that I have not grace at all, but gifts alone: I appeal unto you before the Lord, whoever you are that labour under this fear, whether do you not desire above all to know Jesus Christ and him crucified; whether are not things best that come from a living hand to you; whether do not your disposition lie towards the simplicity of the gospel; and are you not content and satisfied therewithal; whether have you not as good a hand at suffering, when God calls you thereunto, as at doing; whether are you not quenched, when you fall into sin? Oh, yes, saith the poor soul; this I must needs say, through grace thus it is with me; the Lord knows I can speak this in truth, I desire to know nothing but a crucified Christ; living things from a living hand do savour best with me, and my disposition lies towards the simplicity of the gospel; I am not so much taken with the daisies, as with the corn that grows in a sermon and in a prayer; and through grace I have as good a hand at suffering, when God leads me to it, as at doing; and this I can say in truth, that when I do fall into any great sin, that I find some abating and quenching, I cannot pray then as I could pray before. Well, if these things be in you and abound, be of good comfort, here is more than bare gifts, here is grace also.

This doctrine looks wishly also upon those that have no gifts, upon those that are weak in gifts, have either no gifts at all, or very weak gifts; and it calls upon you to be of good comfort. There is many a poor soul complains and says, As for such and such men, they have great gifts, but I have no gifts at all; I have no memory at all, I have no utterance, I have no elocution, I have no gifts in prayer, I have no gifts

in conference. Well, the way of gifts indeed is an excellent way: and hath not the Lord led you in the way of gifts, that excellent way? yet notwithstanding, if he have led you in a more excellent way, have you any cause to complain? Though the way of gifts be an excellent way, the way of grace is a more excellent way, the way of love is a more excellent way. What then, soul, what then? Though the Lord hath not led thee in the way of gifts, that excellent way, yet, I say, if he have led thee in the way of grace, and in the way of love, in the more excellent way, certainly you have no cause to complain.

Will you complain for want of that, which if you had in abundance, you would have less time to tend your own souls? Gifts are given for to profit with, gifts are given for the good of others, to do good to others; the more gifts you have therefore, the more you are to tend upon others, and do good to them; and the more you are to tend upon others, the less time you have to tend upon your own souls. Now, I say, would you complain for want of that, which if you had in abundance, you should have less time to tend your own souls?

Or, will you complain for want of that, which if you had without grace, would be your undoing? The heathens tell us a fable concerning a man, who desired that all that ever he touched might be gold, and, say they, it was granted to him by the gods; when therefore he came to eat his meat, he touched it, so his meat was turned to gold, and so the man was starved: the moral of it is this, that many a man would be utterly undone if he had that which he most desires: and let me tell you this, had you all gifts and golden parts, yet, if you had not grace withal, you would desire that all that ever you should touch might be gold, you would turn all into gifts, and matter of parts, and so your own soul would be undone and starved by it.

Or, will you complain for want of that, which, if you have, may aggravate your condemnation; but, if you want, cannot hinder your salvation? Pray consider it; will you, I say, complain for want of that, which, if you have, may aggravate your condemnation; but, if you want, can never hinder your salvation? If you have gifts, they may aggravate your condemnation; but if you have them not, your wanting of them shall never hinder your salvation. Shall I then complain for

want of them? Yet thus, I say, thus it is with you that complain for want of gifts; hath not the Lord therefore led you in the way of gifts; and hath he led you in the way of grace? be of good comfort: comfort, comfort, comfort, to all those that are weak in gifts, but have truth of grace. Only here give me leave to lay before you some few directions, whether you have gifts, or no.

Either you have gifts, or not; if that you have gifts, then you are called to doing good; if you have not gifts, then you are called to receiving good, for all a man's life should be spent, either in doing good, or receiving; if a man have gifts, then he is called to doing; if a man have no gifts, then he is called to receiving: have you gifts? therefore know, you are called to doing; have you no gifts? know, you are called the more to receiving.

And either you have gifts, or not; if you have gifts, take heed you do not despise those that have none; and if you have not, take heed that you do not envy those that have; take heed you do not desire grace for gifts' sake, as hypocrites do, but rather desire gifts for grace's sake, as the godly do; as your gifts come upon you, labour to grow proportionable in grace: for if a man have a great farm, and have no stock, or a small stock, it is the only way to break him; so if a man have great gifts, and but little grace, it is the only way to undo him.

But, above all things, take heed that you do not lay your gifts at the foundation of your religion; gifts are good in the building, but they are naught in the foundation; gifts are good above, but they are naught beneath: you see how it is in some trades, if men have gunpowder, barrels of gunpowder, or commodities that are apt to take fire, they lay them in the upper rooms on the top of their houses; and if you ask them the reason, Why do not you lay these things below? they will say, Nay, but they are apt to take fire; and if they should but take fire, the whole house might be blown up therewithal. Beloved, gifts and parts are as gunpowder, they are very apt to take fire; and what is the reason that many a professor is blown up, and the whole building of his religion ruined? but because when first he began to look towords heaven, he laid his gifts at the foundation of his profession, whereas Christ only is our foundation, and if any

man will build upon gifts and parts, his whole building will come to nothing: take heed therefore that gifts and parts do not come into the foundation of your religion.

This doctrine looks wishly also upon all of us: Is this true, that though the way of gifts be an excellent way, yet the way of grace is a more excellent way, and the way of love a more excellent way, and more to be desired? Why stand we then so much upon our gifts and parts; and why look we no more after love? love is the great command, the most excellent way; the apostle saith, chap. 13., "Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal." What though I preach as never man preached, yet if I want love, I am but as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal: what though I pray as never man prayed with praying gifts, yet if I want love, I am but as sounding brass, and as a tinkling cymbal; what though I confer and discourse of all things, as never man did, yet if I want love, I am but as sounding brass, and as a tinkling cymbal. Yet, good Lord, how many are there that bear themselves upon these bladders of gifts and parts (which will ere long be pricked) and neglect this way of love. Are there not some professors that do sometimes question their everlasting condition for the want of gifts, yet can go up and down a whole year together in the breach of love, and never question their condition for want of that? Yea, are there not some preachers that fetch the great part of their evidence for heaven from their gifts; and the exercising of their gifts, whilst they lie in the breach of love? The apostle, you see here, doth advance love above all gifts; and I pray let us consider a little what these gifts are, that are thus sunk down before love, which love is advanced above: the apostle tells us they are spiritual gifts, not natural gifts: suppose now I be to preach, and I go from one book to another: out of one book I take one thing, out of another book I take another thing, out of a third book I take another thing, and I do but only put these together that I have out of several books; is this any more than a natural gift? suppose a book-binder be to bind up divers sheets of paper, and he stitcheth them up together, is it any more than a natural gift? so suppose I be to preach, or I be to pray, and I take this expression from one, and that expression from another,

and this thing from one, and that from another and I do only put these things together, is this any more than a natural gift? Aye, but they are spiritual gifts that the apostle doth sink before love, and doth advance love above, yea, and if you observe this scripture, you shall find that they were the highest gifts, for saith he at verse 28. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing." And "though (saith he, chap. xiii.,) I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal." Though I be an apostle, have the gift of an apostle; be a prophet, and have the gift of a prophet, though I have gifts of miracles, yet notwithstanding if I want love, all is nothing: these were great and high gifts, the highest gifts, and yet all nothing without love: and are all these gifts as nothing, spiritual gifts nothing without love? apostolical gifts and prophetical gifts and miraculous gifts, are all these gifts nothing without love? O Lord, what are my poor minnum gifts then without love? my gifts either in preaching, or in praying, or in conference? ah, what poor shrubs are my gifts then? how are they much more nothing without love? and yet how many have these times brought forth that hunt much after gifts, and the exercise of their gifts, and are strangers to the way of love? I had almost said, they are out of love with this grace of love: but if we look into 1 John ii., we find a scripture that may make all of us to take heed how we walk up and down without love. Verse 10., "He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him." Though there be much stumbling abroad, yet if a man love his brother, though he have many failings, and some odd opinions, yet if he love his brother he abideth in the light and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But (saith he, verse 11.) "He that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and he walks in darkness, and he knows not whither he goes." He thinks he is going to heaven, and he is going to hell; he thinks he is going on in a way of zeal, but alas, poor man, he walks up and down in darkness, he knows not whither he goeth; whosoever walks in this way of hatred, or want of love, he walks in darkness, and he knows not whither he goes; but I need not say no more. The apostle here tells us, that the way of

love is an excellent way, the more excellent way, and most to be desired: now therefore, oh, that our love might abound. Oh, that our love, that is much declined in these days, might be recovered. Oh, that our love might abound towards one another, and towards all the saints. Oh, that there were love, and peace, and reconciliation yet among prossessors.

But though such a man be a professor, it may be he is not godly, yea, I do not think he is godly, and why should I love him then?

You know what our Saviour saith concerning the Father, "He maketh his sun to shine upon the good and bad;" and I pray is it not usual with deceitful hearts, first to degrade a godly man into ungodliness, that so they may have room to hate him? There is a great deal of difference between the affection of a profane man, and of an hypocrite; a profane man makes nothing to profess that he hates, and that he doth not love such a man that is godly, and that he hates him because he is pure and holy; but now an hypocrite knows in his conscience that he must not hate a man that is godly: what then? Therefore that he may make room to hate him, he will first make him ungodly; first he will degrade him, and make him ungodly, that so he may have room to hate him; as now, if he have a mind to love one, and to be intimate with him, his conscience tells him, that he must not walk with, or be intimate with them that are wicked; therefore first he will make a man godly, that so he may have room to love him; and so if a man be godly, he will first make him ungodly, that so he may have room to hate him: take heed of this deceit of heart; you say such a one is not godly, take heed of this deceit.

But suppose he be godly, yet notwithstanding he is of a different judgment from me, he is not of the same opinion with me, and should I love him then?

I confess it is hard to do it, and we should all pray that we might be of the same mind; yet where, I pray, do you find in all the Scripture, that the Lord doth make oneness of judgment to be the only rule and measure of love? Where doth the Lord say in any place in Scripture, that oneness of judgment shall be the only measure of our love to one another? Doth a father say unto his child, Child, love your brother, because he is of the same growth with you? No,

but, my children, love one another, for ye are brethren: so the Lord doth not say, My children, love one another, because you are of the same growth, and the same pitch; but love one another, for you are brethren.

Aye, but suppose that a man doth me wrong, stirs and provokes me, and that he hath first made the breach, should I love him then?

Yes, else there were no labour of love: God is not unmindful to forget your labour of love; if there were no provocation, your love were not worthy of God; that faith is a faith worthy of God that steps over difficulties, and that love is a love worthy of God that steps over provocations: you see how it is with a glass that hath sweet liquor in it, the more you stir that glass, the more savoury sweet smell it sends forth; come indeed to a glass that hath filthy and unsavoury liquor in it and the more you stir it the worse it smells. Art thou provoked and art thou stirred? if there be sweet liquor in you, grace and patience within you, the more you are stirred, and the more you are provoked, the sweeter you will smell; but if there be a froward spirit and a froward disposition, if there be filthy liquor within, then indeed the more you are stirred, and the more you are provoked, the worse you will smell. And whereas you speak of his first making the breach upon love, I pray look upon 2 Kings vi., you shall find there with what bloody intentions the king of Syria came to Dothan to take Elisha, at verse 14., "Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots, and a great host, and they came by night and compassed the city." Elisha goes forth unto them at verse 19., and he said, "This is not the way, neither is this the city; follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek: but he led them to Samaria. When they were come into Samaria, (at verse 20,) the Lord opened their eyes: and the king of Israel said (at verse 21) unto Elisha when he saw them, My father shall I smite them? shall I smite them? He answered, Thou shalt not smite them; wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword, and with thy bow? set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink, and go to their master: so he prepared great provisions for them, and when they had eat and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master; so the bands of Syria came no more

into the land of Israel." Mark the issue, the Syrians came out first, were the first that made the breach; well, Israel had advantage upon them, and the king of Israel's fingers did itch at them to be smiting of them, but Elisha would not have it so, but instead of smiting he would have kindness shewn unto them; and I pray what was the effect thereof? having set bread and water before them, and refreshed them with those provisions, they went away, "so the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel." I have read of two famous philosophers that were at great variance, the one an elderly man, the other younger, the elder comes unto the younger with a motion of peace, and the younger willingly embraced it; peace being made, Well, saith the elder, remember that though I were the elder, yet I come to you, and I first offered peace; true, saith the younger unto him again, I acknowledge it, and I shall upon this account for ever account you the more worthy man, because though I was the first that did make the strife, you were the first that did make the peace. And shall heathens do thus, and shall not we christians, go beyond them, or do the same?

Aye, but there is time for all things: there was a time, indeed, for love, and for men to be reconciled, but now things are grown to that height and to that pass, that it is now too late to talk of love and of reconciliation; we confess that the way of love is the more excellent way, and there was a time indeed to have been reconciled, but now it is all too late.

Well, then, if it be too late, give me leave to entreat one thing at your hands, and that is this; I say, If it be too late, and you say it is too late to be reconciled and love one another, let me entreat this, that you would all lay aside your garments, the garments of your profession of being Christ's disciples; for our Saviour saith, "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another:" and therefore if it be too late for to love one another, and to be reconciled, come and let us lay down our garments, let us lay down our profession of being the disciples of Christ; yea, let us lay down our expectation of heaven too, for saith the apostle, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." And is not passion, malice, and want of love, flesh and blood? Certainly, certainly if I do not walk in this way of love, it is not all my parts and all my gifts that will bail me from the

arrest of that scripture, "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." I have read or heard of a certain champion that challenged a devil; two armies being come near to one another, one comes forth out of one army and challengeth to fight hand to hand with any one of the other army; at last there steps forth a man for to meet him, and they being there to fight, and many of both armies gotten round to behold and see what would become of it, who should fall and who should stand; at last saith one of the two, Who are you for? saith the other, Sir, I am for you, and I am come forth to save your life; why, said he, should we, like fools, kill one another to make sport for these beholders? so they threw down their weapons and embraced one another, and so parted with love, to the admiration of all that did behold them. Now, beloved, things are grown to a great height, and there is too much dissension amongst professors, and all men are upon the tiptoe at this time to see who shall fall and who shall stand. But now, after all our animosities, if we would step in to one another, and embrace one another, how would this glorify God and make religion glorious in the eyes of the world? Oh, why should we that are professors kill, wound or abuse one another to make sport for our common enemies that behold us? Believe it, believe it, it is not too late, it is not too late to love one another, it is not too late for me to do my work, as long as it is not too late to receive my wages; and if I say, It is too late to be reconciled; what if God say to me, then, It is too late for my soul to be saved.

What, then, shall we do that we may get into this excellent way of love?

I shall only lay before you two or three directions. Two or three things I conceive there are that yet would make a reconciliation, and repair love among us; that would recover and recruit our love that is much declined. The first is an evangelical, gospel spirit or disposition. A legal disposition is a fretful, froward, fiery disposition, but a gospel disposition is like the gospel, smooth, gentle, loving and sweet. We read of Abraham, that he went in to Hagar, and he had a child, Ishmael, by her; he went in to Sarah, and he had a child by her, Isaac; and these two mothers, Hagar and Sarah, the apostle tells us, Gal. iv., were types of the law and of the gospel. After Abraham had gone in to Hagar, and the child

of Hagar well grown, there was no peace in the family, though it were Abraham's family. And as Abraham then did go in to Hagar, so now the children of Abraham do too much go in to Hagar, the law. And as Luther said, *Cain semper occidit fratrem ad finem mundi;* Cain will be always killing of his brother Abel till the world's end: so say I, Abraham will be always going in to Hagar till Christ come again. I mean, the children of Abraham will be always going in to the law and to Hagar. And what is the reason, I pray, that there are so many divisions and dissensions now among us, and so little love? But because the children of Abraham go so much in to Hagar. I dare boldly say, it is not so much diversity of judgment that maketh these dissensions, as it is the legality of our dispositions; for though your judgments were very different and removed one from another, yet, if your spirits were evangelical, you would love one another: and though your judgments were all of a piece, yet if one were of a legal disposition, and the other of an evangelical disposition, there would be want of love still, still there would be divisions; now, therefore, whensoever you find divisions begin to stir, or want of love, then go to God, and beseech the Lord, saying, O Lord, deliver me from a legal disposition; O Lord, bestow upon me a gospel disposition.

And again, a true and real sense of the name of God, and how greatly the name of Christ and God the Father doth suffer by the divisions of professors, and their want of love, will recruit and recover our love. We are very sensible of our own names, the sufferings of our own names; but were we as sensible of the suffering of God's name, certainly there would not be such want of love amongst us. Luther said in his time, The thief wrongs one, the adulterer wrongs two, the slander wrongs three: but I think four; himself, the person abused, the bystander, and the precious name of God. You have heard, it is likely, of the parable of the stomach. There was a great variance sometimes fell out at Rome, between the people and the senate, insomuch that the people banded together, to the hazard of the commonwealth. The senate, to quiet the people, sent a certain eloquent man amongst them; and when he came amongst them, he propounded them this parable. Saith he: Upon a time the members of the body were at variance with the stomach, be-

cause the stomach devoured all the meat, and lay still, was idle, and did not work, and all the other members of the body wrought hard and sorely for their living: whereupon they all combined against the stomach, and the eye would not see no more for it, and the hand would work no more for it, and the feet would walk no more for it, and the teeth would chew no more for it, and other members refused for to do their office, whereupon the whole body was weak, the eye began to wax dim, the hand began to wax weak, the feet began to be feeble, and all the members began to be weak, and the whole body for to wither. So here, now in these days of ours; one man he thinks he is wronged, and he withholds his influence and his love; and another man he thinks he is wronged, and he withholds his influence and his love; and another man he thinks he is wronged, and he withholds his influence and his love: and so in fine all the members are weakened, and the whole body of the commonwealth weakened; yea, and the body of christianity weakened, and the name of Christ, the precious name of Christ, that suffers much. You that are a professor, you strike at me; and I that am a professor, I strike at you: but I pray, where falls the blow? the blow falls upon the name of Christ, the blow falls upon the name of God. Have I done you wrong? I pray, what wrong hath the name of Christ done you? Hath not Christ suffered enough for us, but shall his precious name suffer more by us? Moses was a man, you know, tender of the name of God: "What shall become of thy great name?" In Malachi's time, it was the character of a man fearing God, that he "thought upon the name of God." Solomon in the Proverbs saith, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous fly thereunto and are safe." Now then, as ever you desire that the name of the Lord should be a refuge and a shelter to you in the evil day; oh, be tender of the name of God, and I dare say, the more tender you that are professors are of the precious name of God, and the more sense you have of the sufferings of God's name, the more you will lay down your weapons one against another, and the more you will set yourselves for to love one another.

And would you love one another now, as you have loved before? then do as you have done before. "I have somewhat against thee, (saith Christ to the church of Ephesus,)

thou hast left thy first love." But wouldest thou be recovered? "Remember from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do thy first works." I wish I might not say, that Christ hath a somewhat against us, even this, that in these days of ours we have lost our former love, love unto one another. But would we be recovered, reclaimed? Oh, let us remember from whence we are fallen, repent and bewail our divisions, declinings in love, and do our first works. What are those? Times were heretofore, when you, that are of different judgments now, would have met together, prayed together, yea, fasted, prayed, and have wept together. So let us do again: we meet now and dispute together, we meet now and we wrangle together, but we shall never dispute ourselves into love. If we would love one another now, as we have done before, then let us do as we did before, meet and pray together, as before. The living fish swims against the stream, the dead fish is carried down with the tide; so a living christian swims against the tide of the times, a dead professor is carried down with all. And which way doth the stream and tide of these times run, but against love? great oppositions that are made to love. Now then, as we desire to be counted living christians, let us make it our work and business to heal and reconcile things. It is in regard of graces, as in regard of ordinances; when any ordinance of God is decried, then it is our duty, and we are called to it, for to cry it up; so when any one grace is opposed, then is our time, and then we are called to advance it most. And when ever was this grace of love among professors so much opposed as it is now? Now therefore, if ever, is our duty to abound in love, and to walk in this excellent way.

But you desire gifts, yea, and your gifts are great; I know where I speak, in this great and famous city of London, where gifts and parts grow alone, even in your streets; yet let me tell you this, though you or I should have all gifts and parts, yet if we want love, we should be but as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. But you desire gifts, the gift of teaching, exercising, that ye may be able to do good to others; and you do well therein, for the way of gifts is an excellent way: oh, but the way of love is a more excellent way. You desire gifts, the gift of prayer, the gift of conference, that you may speak a word in season unto them you

shall meet with; and you do well therein, for this way of gifts is an excellent way; yet saith the apostle, "Behold I shew you a more excellent way." As for all our gifts and parts, they will leave us when we must go in to our Father. Do ye, therefore, any of you desire gifts? desire them still, yea, "covet earnestly the best gifts: but yet shew I you (saith the apostle) a more excellent way:" and ye have heard what that way is; in general, the way of grace, holiness, and of the power of godliness; in particular, the way of love. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of our souls, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect (in this great work of love), working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever." Amen.

SERMON IX.

OF THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

Wherein is shewed,

I.—What this Sin against the Holy Ghost is?
II.—How and in what respect this Sin against the Holy Ghost is above all other Sins the Unpardonable Sin.

Preached at Stepney, December 29, 1650.

"*Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.*

"*And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man shall be forgiven; but whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*"—Matt. xii. 31, 32.

Here are two great arguments laid before you in these words:

First, The largeness of God's heart in forgiving sins unto the children of men: every sin: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."

Secondly, You have here the unpardonableness of the sin against the Holy Ghost: "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

I would rather choose to speak unto the former argument, but if I should do so at the first, possibly some poor soul would say, Though God's heart be very large in forgiving sins, yet there is one sin that shall never be forgiven, the sin against the Holy Ghost; and I fear I have committed that.

That I may therefore take away this obstruction, and make your way plain and easy to the forgiving mercy of the Lord, I shall at this time speak unto the last of these two arguments; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

For the opening of which words two questions must be answered.

The first is, Whether these Jews, that our Saviour spake these words unto, did then sin against the Holy Ghost?

I answer, Some think, no; but I rather conceive that these pharisees did sin this sin against the Holy Ghost; for if you look into Mark iii., ye shall find that our Lord and Saviour spake this because of some words that they had spoken against him: he had cast out devils, and they said, "He cast out devils by the prince of devils," verse 22. Whereupon our Saviour reasoned with them, and at last he saith, at verse 28, "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies: (verse 29) but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven." And the reason of this speech is given at verse 30: "Because they said He hath an unclean spirit." And indeed if these men did not sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, our Lord and Saviour Christ should tell us that there is an unpardonable sin, and not tell us what it is; for unless it be in this scripture, you shall not find, either in the gospel or in the epistles, that the sin against the Holy Ghost is any where mentioned in express words. Now our Lord and Saviour would not tell us that there is an unpardonable sin, and not tell us what it is: but he saith expressly, that "whoever doth blaspheme or speak against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven." And he chargeth those Jews, that they blasphemed and spake against the Spirit of God, or that work which was done by the Spirit; and therefore, without doubt, they did then sin the unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost.

But again, Why is it here said, that he that sinneth this sin shall never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come; is there any forgiving of sins in the world to come?

Chrysostom saith, As men are punished in this world, and in the world to come; so they are pardoned in this world, and in the world to come: pardoned in this world, when any temporal affliction for sin is removed. So I also understand that parable in Matt. xviii. at the latter end; and pardoned in this life when a man is justified, Rom. iv., pardoned and forgiven in the world to come. So saith the apostle in Acts

iii. 19, "That your sins may be blotted out in the day of refreshing." Which day of refreshing, compared with the speech which you have in Heb. ii. speaking of the world to come, shews that the day of refreshing is the time of the world to come. But it is an usual phrase with Scripture, noting the eternity of misery; and therefore if you look again into Mark iii., you shall find, that whereas here in Matthew the words run thus: "Shall not be forgiven, either in this world, or in the world to come;" Mark hath it thus, "He shall never be forgiven," that *never* being the explication of this, "not in this world, nor in the world to come."

The words being thus far opened, the doctrine then will presently be this:

That the sin against the Holy Ghost is the unpardonable sin; that whosoever sins against the Holy Ghost, shall never be forgiven, either in this world, or in the world to come.

For the opening of this great truth, which I shall the rather desire you to hearken unto, because as it lies out of the ordinary road, so it makes your way clear to the laying hold of the former words of God's mercy. I say, for the opening of this truth, we must inquire into two things.

First: What this sin against the Holy Ghost is, for people are very ignorant of it.

Secondly: How and in what respect this sin against the Holy Ghost, is above all other sins the unpardonable sin.

First: If you ask, what this sin is?

I answer both negatively and affirmatively.

Negatively. It is not that sin, whereby men do barely deny the personality, or the deity of the Holy Ghost. Possibly a man may deny the personality or the deity of the Holy Ghost, and yet not sin the sin against the Holy Ghost. For as Chrysostom observes,* in his time there were divers heretics, that did deny the personality and the deity of the Holy Ghost, and yet afterwards repented, and were received into the bosom of the church. And ye do not find that these pharisees, who are here charged with this sin, did either deny the personality or the deity of the Holy Ghost. So that plainly then, the sin against the Holy Ghost doth not

* Πολλοι γαρ των ταυτα ιερηκοτων επιστευσαν, υστερον δε παντα αυτοις αφεθη.—Chrysostom in Math. x.

consist in this, the mere and bare denying of the personality or the deity of the Holy Ghost.

As it doth not consist therein, so neither doth it consist in every opposition, or in a bare opposition unto the work of the Holy Ghost, as distinct from the Father and the Son. Unto God the Father belongs power; unto the Son, wisdom; unto the Spirit, holiness. The work of the Father is to create; the work of the Son, to redeem; the work of the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, to sanctify. And hereupon some have thought, that opposition unto holiness is the sin against the Holy Ghost. But you find here it is a blasphemy, therefore not every opposition. And if you look into Acts vii., you find that Stephen speaking of the Jews, saith at verse 51, "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ear, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost:" yet they did not sin this sin against the Holy Ghost: why? for Stephen prays for them at the last verse, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." But now saith the apostle John, in 1 John v. 16, "There is a sin unto death, I do not say that ye shall pray for it." Had they in Stephen's account sinned this sin unto death, he would not have prayed for them; but he did pray for them. So that this sin against the Holy Ghost, doth not consist in every opposition unto the work of the Holy Ghost, as it is distinct from the Father and the Son.

As it doth not consist therein, so it is not necessary that every man that sins the sin against the Holy Ghost, should be an universal apostate, backsliding from the profession of the gospel, and the power thereof. I know it is ordinarily thought so; but I say, it is not necessary that whosoever doth sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, should be a gospel apostate, backsliding from the gospel, and the power thereof, once professed: for these pharisees, who sinned against the Holy Ghost, never professed the gospel, neither do we read of any backsliding in them, from the power of the gospel once professed; and yet they sinned against the Holy Ghost. Surely, therefore, such a gospel apostacy is not of the essence of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Only here I must distinguish concerning the word apostacy. A man may be said to be an apostate two ways: either because he doth decline and fall away from the profession of the truth, and power of godliness, once professed; or else because he doth rebel

against truth revealed, and the will of God manifested, and will go no further. I will express it thus: five or six men go a great journey, suppose to Wales, or into the north, to Scotland; when they come about the middle of the way, two or three of them say, These ways are dirty, and longer than we intended, and therefore we will go no further; but say the other, Let the way be as dirty, and as long as it may be, we will go on; and on they go: which of these men do depart one from the other; do those that go on depart from them that stay? No; those that will go no further depart, they are the forsakers. So in the way to heaven, professors set out together, and some find the way long, further than they thought of, We will go no further, say they, and we will have no more light; but say the other, God willing, we will on; and on they go. Which of these two sorts are the apostates? Those that will go no further: they think not so, but the Lord knows the truth, that those that will go no further are they that leave and forsake the other. I will give you one scripture for it, it is in Numb. xiv.; there were certain spies went into the land of Canaan, and they brought an ill report upon the good land, "and the children of Israel murmured against Moses," verse 2; whereupon Moses speaks unto them, and saith at verse 9, "Only rebel not against the Lord." The words in the Septuagint, which greek the New Testament follows, are, "Only be not apostates against the Lord." So that in Septuagintal language, those that rebel against light revealed, and will go no further, are called apostates. Now, indeed, this kind of apostacy always goes with the sin against the Holy Ghost, but not the former, always; for we do not find that the pharisees were guilty of the former, for they did not profess the gospel. So that the essence of this sin doth not consist in apostatizing or backsliding from the profession of the gospel and the power thereof.

Some think that this sin doth consist in final unbelief and impenitency; but final impenitency and unbelief is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, for by final unbelief and impenitency, they either understand that impenitency and unbelief which a man lives and dies in, or that which he purposeth to continue in to the last. The latter cannot be the sin against the Holy Ghost, for many have purposed to continue in their unbelief to their death, and yet have been converted and par-

doned.* And the first cannot be the sin against the Holy Ghost, for, 1. The Jews whom Christ spake unto did then commit this sin, and yet they had not continued in it to their death. 2. Final unbelief is rather a sin against the Son; but the sin against the Holy Ghost is distinguished from that. 3. Our Saviour saith, Those that commit this sin shall not be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come. Not in this world. If therefore final unbelief or impenitency be this sin, then Christ should threaten that he that dies in his sin shall not be forgiven whilst he lives. 4. If a man sin against the Father or Son, and die impenitently in that sin, he shall not be forgiven either in this life or in the life to come: but herein the sin against the Holy Ghost is worse than the sins against the Father or the Son, and therefore it cannot consist therein. 5. The apostle saith, 1 John v. 16, "There is a sin unto death, I say not that you pray for it." Doth he say that we must not pray for a man, and for the forgiveness of his sin when he is dead? 6. It is that sin for which there lies no remission, but a man may sin such a sin whilst he lives: for if any man sin wilfully, there remaineth no sacrifice for sin, and wilfully a man may sin before his death. 7. It is such a sin as a man may know another man is guilty of whilst he lives, for saith the apostle, "There is a sin unto death, I say not that you pray for it:" but final unbelief and impenitency is not known till death. 8. Our Saviour saith, "He that speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven." But a word may be spoken against the Spirit long before a man dies, and therefore surely this sin against the Holy Ghost doth not consist in final impenitency and unbelief; final unbelief and impenitency is not this sin against the Holy Ghost. 9. For then all wicked men living under the gospel, and dying impenitently, should sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is false.*

* Altissiodorensis, lib. ii. Tract. 30, in Sentent.

Desperatissimos convertit Deus.—Augustin.

Sic homo potest penitere de finali impenitentia.—Altissiodorensis, ib.

† Blasphemia in Spiritum Sanctum ea esse videtur qua quis destinata malitia contra proprium animi sui sensum Spiritus Sancti gratiam et virtutem deique gloriam oppugnat.—Luc. Brugen. in Matt. xii.

* Ος αν ειπη λογον κατα του υιου του ανθρωπου αφιεθησεται, ος δε αν ειπη κατα του αγιου πνευματος ουκ επι διαλι οτι τουτο γνωριμον υμιν εστι και προν τα δηλα εναιχυντειλε.—Chrysostom in Math. xii.

You will say, then, What is this sin against the Holy Ghost, and wherein doth it consist?

Affirmatively. It is that wilful sinning against God, whereby a man doth maliciously oppose and blaspheme the proper and peculiar work of the Holy Ghost, and that after he hath been convinced thereof by the Holy Ghost.

I say, It is a wilful sinning against God; and so the apostle speaks, saying, "If any man sin wilfully, after he hath received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin," Heb. x. 26. So that the sin for which there is no sacrifice, and of which there is no remission, is a wilful sin. Now a man is said to sin wittingly, willingly, and wilfully: wittingly, in opposition to ignorance; willingly, in opposition to force and constraint; wilfully, in opposition to light, knowledge and reason; and so he that sins against the Holy Ghost doth sin; for says the apostle, "If any man sin wilfully, after he hath received the knowledge of the truth," or after the acknowledgment, την επιγνωσιν, &c.

He that commits this sin doth also oppose and blaspheme the proper and peculiar work of the Holy Ghost; for it is called here, a blasphemy, and a blaspheming of the Spirit, as distinct from the Father and the Son. Now the work of the Father is to create, the work of the Son to redeem, the work of the Holy Ghost to sanctify; and therefore he that sins this sin, doth oppose and blaspheme holiness and goodness; and so these Jews did: for when our Saviour Christ did cast out the devil, that unclean spirit, they said, he did it by the power of the devil, calling the work done, a work of the devil, and did oppose him therein.* Yet this is not all, for,

It is that sin, whereby a man doth maliciously oppose, and blaspheme; and so the word εκουσιως, Heb. x. 26, is used by the Septuagint, Exod. xxi. 13, 14. And thus did those pharisees sin, for the Evangelist tells us, that when Christ saw their thoughts, verse 25, "He said unto them," &c. So that it was not a bare opposing or blaspheming, but a malicious opposing and blaspheming of this great work of the Holy Ghost, which made them so deeply guilty.†

* Dicere verbum contra spiritum sanctum est verbis impugnare Deum sanctificantem. Cajet. in Matt. xii. vide sixth Senens. in locum.

† Peccatum in spiritum sanctum dicitur illud ex carta malitia sit quod solent

But how can a man sin, *ex malitia*, or maliciously, seeing that, *voluntas temper ferter in bonum, et omnis peccans est ignorans.* Now if the will be always carried out upon what is good, and every man that sins, doth sin ignorantly, how any can man be said to sin maliciously, or *ex malitia?*

Yes, very well: for although the will be always carried out upon that which is good; yet that good, is either morally good, called, *bonum honestum*, honest good; or naturally good, called, *bonum utile*, or *jucundum*, profitable, or delightful good. Now the will is not always carried out upon that which is honestly good in appearance; for *voluntas est appetitus universalis*, the will is an universal appetite. And if the will should be always carried out upon that which is honestly good in appearance, then, as Suarez reasons well, every thief and adulterer, should be an heretic, which no man will say. And if the will may be carried out sometimes upon that which is pleasantly, or delightfully, or naturally good; then it may hate that which is morally, and spiritually, and honestly good; for, *amor odii causa*, love is the cause of hatred; the will doth naturally hate that which is contrary to the thing loved; and if the will may hate that which is honestly and spiritually good, then it may oppose and blaspheme the same, and that out of hatred and malice; for every man speaks evil of and opposes what he hates.

If this be a reason why a man cannot sin maliciously, or *ex malitia*, because the will is always carried out upon what is good; then the devils and damned in hell, do not sin maliciously, or *ex malitia*; for they have wills in hell, as well as men on earth; but I presume it will not be said that the devils and damned in hell do not sin maliciously; for then if they sin upon some mistake, and *ex ignorantia*, they should have some excuse for their sin.*

distingui tria genera peccatorum, peccatum in patrem ex infirmitate humana, peccatum in filium ex ignorantia, quod patri appropriatur potentia filio sapientia, peccatum in spiritum sanctum, ex malitia quia bonitas attribuitur spiritui sancto. Altissidorens. Lib. 2. Tract. 30. in Sent. Scot. in Sent. Lib. 2. Ques. 2.

* Non existimo absolute necessarium ad operandum malum per voluntatem ut præcedat defectus erroris in judicio intellectus vel speculativo vel practico. Suar. Metaphys. disp. de necess. et conting. Eff. Sect 7.

Prima Propositio.—Cum perfecta scientia et consideratione vel habituali vel naturali potest esse peccatum et defectus in voluntate, est communis sententia et certa de fide.

Though every man that sins doth sin ignorantly, yet he doth not sin *ex ignorantia*, out of ignorance; ignorance is sometimes the cause of the sin, and so the man sins out of ignorance: sometimes ignorance is the companion and consequent of the sin, and then he sins ignorantly. Now it is granted, that every man that sins doth sin ignorantly, there is always a darkness and obscuration of the mind, which goeth along with every sin; but every man that sins, doth not sin *ex ignorantia*, out of ignorance: I say, it is not true, that every sin doth arise from some precedent error, or ignorance in the understanding, as the cause thereof: For then,

Why should the Holy Ghost make so great and vast a difference between him that sins ignorantly, and him that sins presumptuously? Num. xv. If any sinned through ignorance, there was a sacrifice for him, verse 27, 28, but if any man sinned presumptuously, there was no sacrifice for him, verse 30, 31. Now if every sin do arise *ex ignorantia*, from some precedent error and ignorance in the understanding, as the cause thereof; then presumptuous sins also should arise from this cause, and so there would be no such distinction between them, as the Holy Ghost makes.*

If every sin in the will, should arise from some error or ignorance in the understanding; then the will should be

Secunda Propositio.—Non est necesse præcedere in intellectu aliquem errorem speculationum qui sit quasi origo ad peccandum.

Tertia Propositio.—Ad peccandem non est necessarium ut præcedat inconsideratio speculativa tanquam origo peccandi.

Quarta Propositio.—Etiam ad peccandum non est necessarius error practicus qui peccatum antecrdat et sit quasi origo ejus.

Quinta Propositio.—Moraliter loquendo semper in omni peccato occurrit aliqua inconsideratio practica vel pravitatis objecti vel actus licet si absolutam voluntatis potentiam consideremus neque iste defectus intellectus simpliciter videtur necessarius ad peccandum.

Sexta Propositio.—Licet cum actu peccati semper sit conjunctus ille defectus intellectus non tamen ille est prima origo peccandi sed potius illa reducitur in defectum voluntatis.

Septima Propositio.—Voluntatem posse peccare est defectus quidam naturalis ipsius voluntatis.

Suarez de Causis propriis et interior. peccatorum Disputat. 5. Sect. 1.

* Quod aliquis ignoret illud quod scire debet contingit tripliciter: Uno ex impotentia qua scire non potesi: Alio ex nescientia qua quis nescit quod scire debet: Alio ex voluntate quando quis renuit scire quod debit, illa ignorantia est peccatum mortale, quod est effectus voluntatis, quod est in potestate voluntatis ignorare vel non ignorare. Holcot de imputabilitate peccati.

always carried out upon *bonum honestum*, honest good, at least in appearance; but the will is an universal appetite, and the wills of the devils and damned in hell, are not carried out upon that which is apparently honest.

If every sin should suppose such a precedent error and ignorance in the understanding, then the will cannot fall off from, or *resilire* from the ultimate dictate of the understanding, but must necessarily and continually follow the same; and so the liberty will be formally, and not radicately, in the understanding, and not the will; then the will cannot move, and apply the understanding to cousider a thing, nor be the cause of ignorance in the understanding; yea, then there shall be no sin in the will, because it follows the understanding, as God hath set a law upon it to do; but where grace is, there is sin also.

If the will doth always pre-suppose such an error and ignorance in the understanding, and doth necessarily follow such an act of the understanding, presenting some truth. or honest good, either real, or apparent, then the created and defiled will of man, cannot tend unto any object upon any reason, upon which the divine will of God cannot tend unto its object; for the divine will can tend, and be carried out upon any good, being abstracted from all deformity: and although the created will be carried out, and tend unto that which is apparently good, and the divine will is always carried out upon that which is really good, yet the reason why the created will is carried out upon that which is apparently good, is because it appears to be real, and so the divine will, shall be carried out upon its object, upon no other reason than the created will of man, yea, than the wills of devils, and the damned in Hell, which I suppose none will affirm.*

It is confessed by all that there is a sin of malice, and a sin of ignorance. Now if there be a sin of malice, as Ocham reasons, then he that sins out of malice, hath either an universal, or particular knowledge, or both; if both, then as he

* Utrum voluntas creata possit peccare ex malitia volendo aliquod non ostensum sibi sub ratione boni veri, boni simpliciter vel boni apparentis et secundem quid, &c.

Si non potest tunc videtur quod voluntas creata non possit tendere in objectum sub aliqua ratione sub qua non possit tendere voluntas Divina, voluntas enim divina potest tendere in omne bonum substractum illi deformitati. Scotus lib. 2 Sent. Dist. 44. Quest. 2.

saith, *habetur propositum*, viz., every sin doth not pre-suppose an error, or ignorance in the understanding. If he that sins out of malice, hath an universal knowledge only, then he that sins ignorantly shall have equal knowledge with him that doth sin maliciously; for he that sins ignorantly hath an universal knowledge that every just thing is to be done, and that every good thing that pleaseth God is to be done; but he that sins out of ignorance, hath not equal knowledge with him that sins out of malice; and therefore he that sins out of malice, must have both an universal and a particular knowledge; and if so, then every sin doth not pre-suppose an error and ignorance in the understanding as the cause thereof.* But,

Suppose that some ignorance in the understanding be the remote cause of the sin, yet malice may be the next and chief cause. As for example: suppose that a man hath taken up some prejudice against another, through a mistake and error; yet now he hates him, and out of hatred kills him; shall not this murderer be said to kill him out of malice, because the malice was founded upon a mistake or error? Yes, surely. But why is he said to kill him out of malice? Because malice was the next cause of this murder. So that though ignorance be the remote cause of a sin, yet malice may be the next cause thereof; and being so, he shall be said truly to sin *ex malitia*, though with some precedent ignorance, as the remote cause thereof.*

Yet if you ask, how it can be that the will should be

* Secundum omnes theologos aliquid est peccatum ex malitia.—Ocham. Lib. 3. in Sent. Quest. 12.

Quid est peccatum ex malitia? est communis sententia patrum et Theologorum.—Suarez de pecca. ex. pass. ignor. malitia Disput. 4. Sect. 1.

Peccatum ex malitia communiter dici peccatum ex certa scientia.—Vasquez 12. Tom. 1. Q 78. act.

Tunc quæro an peccans ex malitia habet notitiam tam universalem quam particularem aut tam universalem, si primo habitur propositum, quod habens notitiam tam universalem quam particularem potest ex malitia facere contra utramque, si ducenti ita peccans ex ignorantia habet notitiam universalem sicut peccans ex malitia, quis peccans ex ignorantia scit tales majores, omne justum est faciendum, omne bonum est faciendum quod Deo placet, &c. sed ignorat minores puta hoc est justum, hoc est Deo placitum, &c. si ergo peccans ex ignorantia non tunc plus sciret æqualem scientiam haberet peccans ex malitia et ignorantia.—Ocham in Sent. Lib. 3. Q. 12.

* Quo ex malitia? an eousque amentiæ prosilire queant homines ut Dei gloriam oppugnare scientes et volentes non dubitent? Resp. audacium istam prodire

always carried out upon what is good, and yet a man sin maliciously? Plainly thus: from what hath been said, the will of man is an universal appetite, willing that which is naturally good, as well as that which is honestly good: if it be carried out upon that which is naturally good, it will hate all that spiritual good which is contrary to the obtainment of it, and the man will oppose and blaspheme what the will hates. Now because the hatred and malice of the will, is the cause of that blasphemy and opposition, the man is truly said to oppose and blaspheme out of malice, though the will be carried on upon that which is naturally good at the same time; which was the case of these pharisees: for they sought their own honour and greatness; Christ and the truth opposing, they did hate him and the truth; and because they hated him, the truth, and that light which reproved their sins, they did oppose and blaspheme, and that out of malice, and so the sin against the Holy Ghost is a malicious sin, or that sin whereby a man doth oppose and blaspheme the proper and peculiar work of the Spirit out of malice. Yet this is not all. But,

It is that sin against God, whereby a man doth maliciously oppose and blaspheme the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost, after he hath been convinced thereof by the Holy Ghost; for possibly a man may oppose and blaspheme, even maliciously, the work of the Holy Ghost, and yet not be convinced of it by the Holy Ghost, but otherwise; but those that sin this sin, are such as are enlightened, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost in the gifts and common graces of it, Heb. vi. And so these pharisees were convinced, by the Spirit which did work that great work before them; and yet after such a convincement wrought by the Spirit, they did maliciously oppose and blaspheme this work of the Spirit. So that I say, the sin against the Holy Ghost, is that wilful sinning against God, whereby a man doth maliciously oppose and blaspheme the proper and peculiar work of the Holy Ghost, and that after he hath been convinced thereof by the Holy Ghost. Or if you will, thus: it is that deliberate sinning against God, whereby men do oppose the work of God, which their own conscience and conviction tells them is

quidem ex cordis cæcitate sed in qua malitia exsuperet, ut clarum est hoc loco de Pharisæis —Lucas Brugensis in Matt. 12.

wrought by the Spirit and finger of God, in order to man's salvation, yet out of malice do blaspheme the same.*

Secondly, But why is this sin, above all other sins, unpardonable?

Not in regard of difficulty only, or because it is hardly pardoned, as some would; for many sins are hardly pardoned, and yet are not the sins against the Holy Ghost; for, as Zanchy doth well observe, if this sin were only unpardonable, because it is hardly pardoned, then a man might pray for those that sin this sin: but the apostle saith, "There is a sin unto death, I do not say that ye shall pray for it," 1 John v. 16. Therefore the unpardonableness of it, doth not lie here.†

Neither is it unpardonable only in regard of event, because in event it shall never be pardoned; for there are many sins which in event shall never be pardoned, which yet are not the sins against the Holy Ghost. There is many a wicked man that goes to hell, whose sins in event are not pardoned, and yet he did never sin against the Holy Ghost. So that this sin is not unpardonable only in regard of event.

Neither is it unpardonable because it is so great as doth exceed the power and mercy of God; for God's mercy and power, in forgiving sins, is like himself, infinite. If that be a good argument that David useth, "Forgive my sin, for it is wondrous great;" then the greatness of the sin cannot be the only reason of the unpardonableness of it. There is nothing greater than that which is infinite, but God's mercy is infinite.

Neither is it unpardonable because it is against the means of pardon; for then the sin against the free love of the Father, and the sin against the Son, should be unpardonable.

Neither is it unpardonable because a man doth not repent thereof; for then all sins unrepented of, should be sins against the Holy Ghost. It is true, that those who commit this sin cannot repent, as the apostle speaks, It is impossible

* Tunc aliquis maxime peccat in spiritum sanctum quando contra divinitatis opera stupenda ordinata ad nostram salutem aliquis convitia jactat cum proposito perseverandi in illo peccato usque ad mortem, abjectis procul spe et timore Dei Domini.—Bannes, 22. Q. 14. Art. 1.

† Peccatum dicitur irremissibile septem de causis. Altissidorens. Lib. 2. Tract. 30. in Sent.

that they should be renewed to repentance, Heb. vi., because God doth give them up to impenitency: but we do not find in Scripture, that their not repenting is made the reason of the unpardonableness of this sin.*

But the sin is unpardonable because there is no sacrifice laid out by God's appointment for it; "If any man sin wilfully, there remaineth no more sacrifice," Heb. x., and without blood and sacrifice there is no remission. He that sinned ignorantly, Numb. xv., was pardoned; why? because there was a sacrifice laid out for him; but if any man sinned כיד רמה with a high hand, he was to bear his own sin; why? because there was no sacrifice laid out for him. But why was there no sacrifice for that sin? Not because the man did not repent after it; but because that in the committing of that sin, he did despise the commandment of God. So now, God hath declared that every sin and blasphemy against the Father and Son, may be forgiven; but if men come to that height of sin, as maliciously to oppose and blaspheme that very way and work of God's Spirit, which they have been convinced of by the Spirit, then there shall he no sacrifice for that, and so no remission and pardon.*

And thus now ye have seen what the sin against the Holy Ghost is; in what respects it is not, and in what respects it is unpardonable; and so the doctrine cleared and proved, That the sin against the Holy Ghost, is the unpardonable sin, which shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.

The application follows:

If the sin against the Holy Ghost be the unpardonable sin, then surely the Holy Ghost is God, very God, true God, as the Father is: for can it be a greater evil, or more dangerous, to sin against a creature, than against God the Father? It is God that is sinned against, now the Holy Ghost

* Nunquam remittetur, quod intellige regulariter, nam nec divina potentia nec divina miserecordia alligata est ad non remittendum, spiritus blaspbemiam, sed secundum regularem cursum eveniet non remissio quod comitem semper habet obstinationem.—Cajetan. in Matt. 12.

Duplicitur dicitur peccatum irremissibile, dicitur uno quod nunquam remittetur, alio dicitur irremissibile quod remitti non potest et sic non sequitur iste est similiter impenitens ergo habet peccatum irremissibile.—Holcot de imputabilitate peccati.

is sinned against; yea, the unpardonable sin is against the Holy Ghost. The Socinians say, That if he be a person, he must needs be God, true God: but ye see by this scripture, that he is joined with the other person of the Son; so also he is joined with the Father and the Son, in Matt. xxviii. in whose name we are to baptize. He who hath a name, and in whose name something is to be done, must needs be a person. And I pray you, what is proper and peculiar to a person? Is not understanding, willing, and speaking? these are all given to the Spirit. 1 Cor. ii. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 11; Rom. viii. 26, 27; Acts xiii. 2; and xx. 28. But I need go no further than this text; here the Spirit is joined with the Son, and the sin against the Holy Spirit is made the unpardonable sin. Surely, therefore, he is verily and truly God as the Father is.

If this doctrine be true, then what a necessity is there upon us all, to know and understand what this sin against the Holy Ghost is; for if a man have sinned this sin, we are to forbear praying for him, 1 John v. 16. Therefore we may know what this sin is, and we may know that another hath committed the same; for how can we forbear prayer for him, if we do not know and understand what this sin is? The not knowing what this sin is, makes many men fall into it before they are aware. When the laws of a nation are written in an unknown tongue, the people break them before they are aware, because they do not know them. So the not knowing what this sin is, makes many a poor soul to fall into it; yea, the not knowing what this sin is, breeds many scruples, doubts, and fears in new converts. Oh, saith one, I have sinned that great sin against the Holy Ghost; and I, saith another, have sinned the unpardonable sin: and why? but because the man doth not know what this sin is! Oh, what a necessity, therefore, is there upon us all, to know and understand what this sin is, and wherein it doth consist.

If the sin against the Holy Ghost be the unpardonable sin, what mercy and what grace is it, that the Lord hath kept us from this great sin; that though ye have fallen into great and heinous sins, and the Lord hath suffered you to fall into such sins that you may be humbled; yet that the Lord should keep you from this sin, this unpardonable sin, for

which there is no sacrifice, nor no remission; oh, what mercy and what grace is this.

But I am afraid I have sinned this sin, and the truth is I have often feared it; and my reason was and is, because my sins are so great, so exceeding great.

Great, say ye; how great, man? I have sinned against my light, I have sinned against my knowledge, I have sinned against my conviction; and therefore I fear I have sinned the unpardonable sin. But I pray, for answer, did not Adam sin against light, when he eat the forbidden fruit? Did he not sin against his knowledge, and against conscience? Yet he sinned not against the Holy Ghost, though he brought all the world under condemnation by his sin; for the Lord himself came and preached mercy to him, "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head." And I pray did not Jonah, when he run away from God, sin against his light; and did he not sin against his conviction, and against his knowledge? yet he did not sin against the Holy Ghost, for the Lord pardoned him and wonderfully delivered him. Possibly this therefore may be, and yet not a sin against the Holy Ghost. It is true indeed, that those who sin against the Holy Ghost, do sin against their light, knowledge, and conscience; but whoever sins against light and knowledge, though he sins greatly, doth not sin against the Holy Ghost.

Oh, but I fear that I have sinned this sin, for I have fallen foully into gross sins.

That is ill. But I pray did not David sin so; were they not great and gross and foul sins that David fell into, such as one of your civil, moral men would abhor? yet he did not sin against the Holy Ghost, for the Lord pardoned him, and Nathan said from the Lord, "The Lord hath forgiven thee."

Oh, but yet I fear that I have sinned this great sin, for I am much declined, I have lost my former acquaintance and communion with God; I have lost my former heat and affections to good, and in duty; and I fear upon this account that I have sinned this great sin.

Be it so: yet did not the church of Ephesus lose her first love? yet this church of Ephesus did not sin the sin against the Holy Ghost: why? for the Lord saith unto her, "Repent and do thy first works." She could not have repented thus, if she had sinned this sin.

Oh, but yet I fear that I have sinned this great sin, because that I have sinned directly against the Spirit; I have quenched, I have grieved, I have resisted the Spirit: the Spirit of the Lord hath come and fallen upon my heart in preaching, and I resisted and grieved it; the Spirit of the Lord hath fallen upon my heart in prayer, and I have grieved that; therefore I fear I have sinned this great sin, that shall never be pardoned.

This is ill too; but those that you read of in Acts vii., resisted the Holy Ghost, yet they did not sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, for then Stephen would not have prayed for them. And indeed, beloved, if every resisting of the breathings of the Spirit, and grieving of the Holy Ghost, were the unpardonable sin, what godly man would be free? A godly man is more properly said to grieve the Spirit, than a wicked man. If an enemy strike you, you are angry; if your friend strike you, ye are grieved. If a wicked man strike at God, he is angry with him; if a godly man strike at God, God is angry, and his Spirit is grieved, because he is a friend. "Grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." So that thus far, possibly a man may go, and yet not sin this unpardonable sin.

But I am afraid that I have sinned this great sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost, because I have not owned but denied the truth. The work of the Spirit is to enlighten and to lead into truth, and I have not owned but denied the truth rather, therefore I fear that I have sinned this great sin against the Holy Ghost.

This is evil, very evil. I remember a speech of Godtes-chalchus,* worthy to be written in letters of gold: I am afraid, said he, to deny the truth, lest I should be for ever denied by the truth, that is, Christ. But I pray, did not Peter deny the truth when he denied Christ; and did he not do it again and again, and did he not do it openly, with scandal; and did he not do it after admonition; and did he not do it with cursing and swearing? and yet he did not sin against the Holy Ghost, for the Lord pardoned, and took him into his bosom, and made him a blessed instrument in the church. Thus far yet a man may go possibly, and yet not sin this sin.

* Timeo veritate negare quia metuo a veritate negari.

Oh, but I am afraid yet that I have sinned it, for I have been an opposer of goodness, I have been an opposer of the people of God, and I have been a blasphemer; therefore I fear I have sinned this sin.

This is ill indeed. But, I pray, tell me, was not Paul an opposer and blasphemer of the saints and ways of God; and yet he did not sin against the Holy Ghost; for I did it ignorantly, saith he: "I was a blasphemer and a persecutor, but I obtained mercy, for I did it ignorantly."

Oh, but I have sinned, and I have done it maliciously, and therefore I fear I have sinned this same dreadful sin.

This is yet worse: but what mean you by that word maliciously? A man may be said to sin *ex malitia* or maliciously three ways, saith Aureolus:* Either because he sins from some evil habit, and so all wicked men sin; yet they do not all sin against the Holy Ghost? or, because a man sins out of anger, passion, or evil will against another; so Paul sinned when he persecuted the church of God, he was carried out with a malicious spirit against the saints and people of God; yet he did not sin against the Holy Ghost: or else, because a man is moved to sin, not out of any evil habit, passion, or ignorance, but merely from the liberty of his own will, because it pleaseth him, and because he doth hate that which his own conviction tells him is right and good. Now have you sinned thus? Surely no; for then you would not be troubled about it, but be well pleased with it.

Oh, but yet I fear I have sinned this great sin, for I have forsaken God, and God hath forsaken me; God is gone, Christ is gone. and mercy is gone. Oh, what freedom once I had, but now God is departed from me, God hath forsaken me: and I fear it is upon this account, because I have sinned this great sin.

But doth not David say, "How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me, forsake me?" and our Saviour himself saith, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There is a

* Peccatum ex malitia quandoque dicitur peccatum ex habitu, puta quando ex malo habitu, quis est intemperatus vel gulosus et sic non loquimur in proposito, alio modo dicitur quod procedit ex passione tamen deliberate et scienter puta si quis invideat, &c, nec sic loquimur in proposito; sed vocatur peccatum ex malitia proprie qnando movetur quis non ex habitu nec passione nec ignorantia sed ex mera libertate voluntatis Sc. quod sic placet et hoc modo dicitur peccatum in spiritum sanctum.—Aureol. in lib. ii. Sent. Dist. 43, Art. 1.

gradual forsaking, and there is a total. As with a man that goes from his house; possibly he goes a voyage, or is from home a quarter, half a year, or a year; but he doth not leave his house; for his wife, his children and goods are there still: but another man goes from his house, the house is let, and he carries away all his goods: this is a total departure, the other gradual. So now it is with the Lord: he doth sometimes forsake his own children for a time; but he doth not pull down his hangings, or carry away his goods; he doth not go away, but returns again; this is gradual. But there is a total forsaking of a man, and then he gives him up to his sin. Now this is not the burden that you lie under; for if God had thus forsaken you, you would be given up to your sins, and you would give up yourselves unto all uncleanness.

Oh, but I am afraid, yet, that I am under the worst forsaking, and that therefore I have sinned this great sin; for I do lie despairing, saying, God is gone, and mercy gone; I am in the dark. Oh, I despair, I despair, and upon this account I fear I have sinned this great sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost.

You know what Heman said, "I remember God and am troubled; O Lord (saith he), all thy waves are gone over my head." The waves of thy wrath are gone over my head, and yet a penman of Scripture. Aretius tells us of a certain man in his time: It is no feigned story, saith he, but I saw the man with my own eyes, one that had been a most vile and desperate sinner, a drunkard, a swearer, a wanton, a gamester, and so he continued to his grey hairs; but at the last it pleased God to set his sins in order before him, and the man was so troubled in conscience, that he threw himself down upon the ground, calling unto Satan to take him away, provoking Satan to take him away; Devil, take thy own; I am thy own, take thy own. Whereupon, saith Aretius, prayer was made for him; christians prayed, they fasted and prayed, they prayed night and day; and, it pleased God, at last this poor man revived, converted to God, lived a godly life, and died comfortably. So that it is not an easy thing, saith he, to pronounce what the sin against the Holy Ghost is. But, now, whosoever you are that have laboured under this fear, as indeed this fear I know hath oppressed many, give me leave to ask you four or five short questions.

The first is, Whether canst thou not find in thy heart to forgive men that do trespass against thee? Do not you find a disposition in your own heart to forgive others? Yes, I praise the Lord that I do. Now if you can find in your heart to forgive others, I am sure God can find in his heart to forgive you, and therefore you have not sinned this great sin, which is unpardonable.

Secondly, Whether, aye or no, have you ever opposed the ways of God, the people of God, and that out of malice? No: I confess I have opposed them, but the Lord knows I did it ignorantly, it was not out of malice; then remember the description of this sin.

Thirdly, Whether, aye or no, do not you desire to be humbled for every sin, though it be never so small? Yes, for though I know that my greatest humiliation cannot, *placere Deum*, make an atonement for my sin; yet I know that the least humiliation in truth doth, *placere Deo*, please God, and it is my duty to be humbled for every sin; for the least sin is a great evil; and he that commands humiliation for the one, commands it for the other also; and through grace I desire to be humbled for every sin: why then you cannot have sinned against the Holy Ghost, for it is impossible that they that sin this sin should be renewed to repentance.

Fourthly, Whether, aye or no, do not you desire above all things the breathings of the Spirit of God upon your heart? Yes: oh that God would come and breathe upon my poor soul in duty. But those that sin against the Holy Ghost, do despite to the Spirit of grace. Heb. x.

Fifthly, Where do you find in all the Bible, that those that sin this sin against the Holy Ghost, are afraid that they have sinned it? Those that sin against the Holy Ghost, are never afraid that they have sinned against the Holy Ghost. This alone satisfied Mistress Drake, a woman much troubled in conscience; she was afraid she had sinned against the Holy Ghost; Mr. Dod, of blessed memory, came to her, and told her, that therefore she had not sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, because she feared she had sinned it; for those that sin the sin against the Holy Ghost are never afraid that they have sinned it; and she acknowledged it did satisfy her, and she was thereupon comforted. Now, therefore, where is the man or woman that hath laboured under such a fear as

this? Oh, I have sinned this unpardonable sin! Art thou one that fearest thou hast sinned it? I tell thee from the Lord thou art free from it, and thou mayest go home and say thus: Though I have sinned much, for which the Lord humble me, yet I bless God I am kept from this great sin. And oh, my beloved, what a mercy is it, that among all the sins that we have committed, that yet we should be kept from this great sin! The greater the evil is, the greater is the mercy to be kept from it. Now, I pray, what is the misery of this sin? Is it not a great misery to be past prayer, to be thrown out of the prayers of the saints? "For such an one pray not," saith the apostle. Is it not a great misery for a man to be beyond the line of mercy? A man that hath sinned this sin against the Holy Ghost, is worse, spiritually, than a man that is sick of the plague outwardly; for if a man be sick of the plague, ye pray for him, and say, Lord, have mercy upon him; but if a man have sinned this sin, he is past prayer and past pardon, he is past sacrifice: the truth is this man is in the devil's case: the devil, you know, is reserved in chains unto the great day, and he cannot get out; so, if a man hath sinned this sin, though he live ten years, twenty years, or thirty years, he is reserved in chains, and he shall never be pardoned, he is upon the devil's ground, Oh, what a misery is it to commit this sin! Oh, what a mercy is it, then, to be kept from it! Now here is hope for the greatest sinner in the congregation upon this account. Saith our Saviour, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." Hast thou, therefore, been a great sinner? Hast thou been a drunkard? Hast thou been a wanton? Hast thou been a swearer? Hast thou been an opposer of the people of the Lord; and hath the Lord kept thee from this great transgression? Man or woman, here is hope yet. Who would not then turn to God? Come drunkard, swearer, wanton, here is yet hope for thy soul. Who would not come in to Christ?

And oh, what comfort is here for believers that are in Christ? If thou beest in Christ, and a believer, thou canst not sin this sin: that look as it is with a man that hath sinned this sin, he cannot be pardoned; so if a man be the child of God, a believer in Christ, he cannot sin this sin; for "he that is born of God sinneth not, neither can he,

for the seed of God abides in him." Oh, you that are believers, comfort yourselves with this truth. Here is comfort for all the people of the Lord from this doctrine.

But again, If the sin against the Holy Ghost be indeed the unpardonable sin, what cause have we all to look to our steps, to our words, to our actions? Beloved, this sin against the Holy Ghost, is the professor's sin; a man less than a professor cannot sin this sin against the Holy Ghost; this sin against the Holy Ghost is the knowing man's sin, a man less than a knowing man cannot sin the sin against the Holy Ghost: and, as I said before, a man may possibly go very far in sin, and yet not commit this great unpardonable sin: so now on the other side, I say, possibly a man may go very far in religion, and yet he may sin this sin. These pharisees that committed it, had the key of knowledge: knowing they were, and very knowing in the Scriptures; as for zeal, they travelled sea and land to make a proselyte; for their practice, they fasted twice a week, exceeding strict in observing the Sabbath day; the lights of the church, and the eyes of all the people were upon them for their guides; and yet these men sinned this sin against the Holy Ghost. Oh, what care should there be in all our souls; how had we all need to look to our ways! The more truth revealed, the more danger of sinning this sin, the more great works of God are done by the very Spirit and finger of God; if men do oppose and blaspheme, the more danger of sinning this great sin. Now I will appeal to you, when was there ever more light revealed than in these days of ours; yet when more opposing and blaspheming of it? When were there ever such great works done by the very Spirit and finger of God; and yet when more opposing and blaspheming? Are there not some that have been convinced that the Spirit of God breathed upon their hearts in such and such ordinances, and such and such ways, and yet now oppose and blaspheme those very ways of God, wherein they said heretofore they had the Spirit of God? Are there not some that are convinced that in these times great things are done by the very finger, by the power and arm of God among us, and that in order to our salvation; and yet how do men speak against them, and blaspheme? I will not say that these men do it out of malice, and therefore I do not

charge this sin against the Holy Ghost upon them; but, beloved in the Lord, this is certain, that in knowing times, times when God is doing great things by his own finger, then is this sin stirring most. The times of Christ, and of the apostles, were times of great light, when God wrought by his own finger, then was this sin committed. Now in these times, there is much breaking forth of light, and great things done by the very finger of God; therefore, I say, there is great danger if men do now blaspheme; wherefore I say again, take heed to your souls, you that are professors, look to your steps in these days of ours.

But you will say, We grant indeed that this sin against the Holy Ghost, is the unpardonable sin, and woe be to them that do fall into it, and it cannot be committed but by a knowing man; but what shall we do that we may be kept from this great transgression; that whatsoever sin we do fall into, yet we may be kept from this great evil, and this unpardonable sin?

I would that you would mind and consider the description which you have heard, and think of it. But I will tell you what David did; saith David, "O Lord, keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, so shall I be free from the great transgression:" It seems then that presumptuous sinning makes way to this great transgression. When is a man said to sin presumptuously? When a man sins upon this score, that God will shew mercy to him, saying: I know, indeed, it is not good for me to go to such a wicked company, it is a sin so to do; but I will venture, and repent afterwards, for God will shew mercy. To venture upon a sin, presuming that God will shew mercy, and that a man shall repent afterwards, is presumption, and presumptuous sinning makes way to this great transgression; therefore would you be kept from this great transgression? go to God with David, and say, "O Lord, keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, so shall I be free from the great transgression."

Again: Be always humbled for lesser sins: he shall never fall into the greatest, that is always humbled for the least; he shall never fall into the worst, that is always humbled for the smallest.

Besides, fear is the keeper of innocency; *Timor innocen-*

tiæ custos, fear is the guard of innocency: if you always fear to commit it, you shall never commit the same.

In case that you do at any time fall into sin, say, Well, but through the grace of God, though I commit what is evil, I will never oppose what is good; by the grace of God I will carry this rule along with me: Though I commit what is evil, I will never oppose what is good.

In case any great work be done before you, that lies beyond your reach and beyond your fathom, say, though I do not understand this work, I will admire; and though I cannot reach it, yet I will not blaspheme and speak against it.

And if heretofore, christian, thou hast found God breathing upon thy heart in any ordinance, public or private, or in any way of God, take heed, as for thy life, that thou dost never speak evil or blaspheme that way of God wherein thou hast found the Spirit of God breathing. This sin is always accompanied with *invidentia fratrum*, with the envy of the saints, and therefore some have thought the sin against the Holy Ghost did consist in it, in the envying of the saints; but though that be not it, yet that accompanies it. Canst thou not find thy own heart rise to those heights of graces that others do? take heed you never envy the saints lest you fall from envying those that are good, to oppose goodness itself, which is the proper work of the Holy Ghost.*

And if, indeed, you would be kept from this great transgression, then take heed of all declinings, and the steps thereof. There are three steps, as in our conversion to God, so in our apostacy, declining, and going out from God. Three steps in our coming in to God: first, a man's affection is taken with that which is good; then his judgment is convinced; and then his will strikes in, and he resolves with all his heart and soul to cleave to the Lord for ever. So in a man's declining and going out from God: first, a man's affection declines; then his judgment alters: I thought so and so indeed before, but now I am of another mind; and then it comes to his will, and he will go on, and let parents say, and ministers say, and friends say what they will, yet he will go on, and that because he will. Now saith the apostle, "If any

* Hinc discimus quantopere nobis ab odio fratrum, cavendum est, quandoquidem eo fit, ut quandoque odio hominis in ipsam Dei veritatem feramur precipites. Cartwrighti Harm. p. 357.

man sin wilfully, after he hath received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Therefore as you desire to be kept from this great transgression: doth your affections decline? take heed your judgment do not alter; doth your judgment alter? take heed that your will be not perverse: oh, take heed of all declinings, and the steps thereof.

But finally, Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some have been; but as heretofore provoke one another to love and good works; and so much the more as you see the day approaching; and what I say to you, I say to all, and to mine own soul, Let us breathe after the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, "for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Oh, let us pray to God for his keeping grace, it is he alone that keeps us; and the Lord keep all our souls from this great transgression.

SERMON X.

OF THE SIN OF INFIRMITY.

Wherein is shewed, besides other things,

I.—That a Man may possibly fall into the same Sin again and again, yet be a true Disciple.
II.—That this Sin may be but a Sin of Infirmity.
III,—That being so, Christ will not leave him in it, but will come again, and not cast him off.

Preached at Stepney, A.D. 1656.

"*And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.*"—Matt. xxvi. 43.

In the verses next precedent and consequent, you may see the difference between the true and the false disciple; both sinned, but they differ in their sin, and in the issue of it. The true disciple sleeps, when he should have prayed; and he slept again and again, that was his sin, for our Saviour commanded them to watch and pray. But Christ wakened them, and would not leave them sleeping; he came to them with his wakening mercy, and they were awakened; that was the issue of their sin. But the false disciple Judas was awake, and he watched unto what is evil. The good disciple slept unto what was good, and the false disciple watched unto what was evil; that was his sin. "For while Christ yet spake (ver. 17), lo Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he, hold him fast: and forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him." This was his sin, wherein our Saviour leaves him, and doth not awaken him, but suffered him to go on, leading him forth with the workers of iniquity. That was the issue of his sin.

In this verse 43, you have the true disciple's sin, and the Lord's grace; his dealing by Christ, and Christ's dealing by him.

He slept when he should have been at prayer; which sin is described by the cause thereof, and by the repetition of it.

The cause of it in these words: "For their eyes were heavy." This sin, therefore, was a sin of infirmity, a sin of weakness, and so our Saviour calls it, ver. 41, for saith he, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

The repetition of this sin you have in these words: "He found them asleep again." Christ had wakened them before, and commanded them to pray; but they slept again and again. Thus did they deal by Christ.

But how did Christ deal by them? He did not leave them in their sin, nor cast them off, as he did deal by Judas; but he came to them again, and as they slept again, so Christ came again: his waking grace and mercy was as high as their slumbering sin; they sin again, and he comes again. So that the doctrine from the whole verse is this:

Though a man do sin again and again, yet if his sin be a sin of infirmity, Christ will not leave him in it, but will come again, and not cast him off.

For the opening and clearing whereof, three things will fall under our consideration.

First, That a man may possibly fall into the same sin again and again, yet be a true disciple.

Secondly, That this sin may be but a sin of infirmity.

Thirdly, That being so, Christ will not leave him in it, but will come again, and not cast him off.

First, It is possible that a good man may fall into the same sin again and again.

I confess it is an evil thing so to do, and a great evil. In some respects it may be worse to fall into the same sin, than to fall into others; for this may more waste one's peace, and destroy the assurance of God's love. Sins against light do the most darken. Now when we have repented, and then fall into that very sin which they repented of, they do sin against light; yea, it is a kind of repenting of one's repentance: for as when a man hath gone on in a sinful way, and doth return unto God, he doth then repent of his sin; so when a man hath gone on in a good way, and doth return to his sin, then he doth as it were repent of his repentance.* When God pardoneth a man, he saith, Go and sin no more:

* Lavamini mundi estote, Esa. i. Lavatur et mundus est, qui et preterrita

do I therefore return unto the same sin? then am I most unthankful, disingenuous, and disobedient; yea, it is exceedingly displeasing unto the Lord, for a man to fall into the same sin again and again. Ye shall observe, therefore, that although the Lord pardoned the children of Israel that great sin of idolatry in the matter of the golden calf, yet in reference to the land of promise, he did not pardon their unbelief and murmuring, for they entered not into Canaan; why? because of their unbelief, saith the apostle. Now if you look into Numb. xiv. 19, you shall find that Moses prayed, "Pardon I beseech thee, O Lord, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned, according to thy word; but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." At ver. 22, "Because all these men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land, which I sware to give unto their fathers." Though I pardon them, saith God, they shall never come into Canaan, the land of rest that I have promised: why? because they have sinned these ten times, murmuring again, and again, and again. So that it is exceedingly displeasing unto the Lord, for a man to fall into the same sin again and again. But yet, I say, it is possible that a good man, and true disciple of Christ, may fall into the same sin again and again. It was a sin for them thus to sleep, when our Saviour had commanded them to watch and pray; but they slept again and again. Look I pray you into Job xix., and see what Job saith concerning his friends: "These ten times (saith he, at verse 3) have ye reproached me, yet are ye not ashamed." It is an evil thing to reproach a man, it is worse to reproach a godly man, as it is yet worse to reproach a godly man under affliction, and to afflict the afflicted. But to reproach a man ten times, this is evil indeed; yet saith Job, "These ten times have ye reproached me:" and yet Job's friends were godly. Possibly then, a good man may fall into

plangit, et iterum non admittit; lavatur et non est mundus, qui plangit quod gessit, nec deserit, sed post lachrimas flenda, hæc quæ fleverat, repetit. — Augustini Ser. 66, de tempore.

the same sin again, and again, ten times: that is very often. And you know how it was with Abraham, the father of the faithful. You read in Gen. xii., that when he was driven by reason of famine into Egypt, he desired his wife, Sarah, to say that she was his sister; which indeed was no lie, but his sin of unbelief, and very evil, for thereby he put his wife upon a great temptation. He was reproved for it, as you read in the chapter; yet if you look into chap. xx., you shall find that he was at the same work again. "And Abraham journied towards the south country; and Abraham said (ver. 2) of Sarah his wife, She is my sister." And so also if you look into 2 Chron. xix., you shall find it was thus with that good king Jehoshaphat, complying too much with the king of Israel, for which he is reproved, at ver. 2: "And Jehu went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." Yet if you look into chap. xx. you shall find that he falls into the same sin again: "And Eliezer prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, (at the last verse) Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works: and the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish." Jehoshaphat a good man, yet he falls into the same sin again. So that I shall not need to spend longer time in this, it is too apparent: possibly a good man, a true disciple of Christ, may fall into the same sin again and again. That is the first.

Secondly. Though a man do fall into the same sin again and again, yet it may be but an infirmity.

For the opening and clearing of this, we must consider what a sin of infirmity is, and what is the true notion of it: which being cleared, the truth proposed will naturally fall into your bosom. Properly, therefore, a sin of infirmity is that sin which doth rather arise from want of strength to resist, than from will to commit, else it should be wickedness and not weakness.

But, in Scripture phrase, it is called a weakness, as here in this chapter, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak;" and Rom. vi. 19, "I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity (or weakness) of your flesh." And, therefore, it must be in one that hath spiritual life. You do not say

that a stone is infirm or weak; why? because a stone hath no life in it: infirmity is a defect in one that hath life.

And, I say, it doth arise, not from wilfulness, but want of strength to resist. Now this want of strength to resist, doth either arise from some natural cause, which one cannot avoid, of which Paul speaks in Rom. vii. 19, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do:" and why so? he gives the reason at verse 21, "I find, then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me;" and verse 23, "I find a law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and leading me captive," &c.: or else it doth arise from some present distemper, and that either in the mind and judgment, and then it is called an error, "Who knoweth the errors of his life?" Psalm xix., Heb. iii. 2: or else this distemper doth arise from some present passion, fear or the like, whereby a man is hurried into evil, and then he is said to be overtaken, Gal. vi. 1. So that when a man is alive unto God, and doth commit a sin for want of strength to resist, then he is said to sin out of infirmity.

Therefore if you ask whether every sin that a godly man doth commit be a sin of infirmity? I answer, No; because there are some sins that a godly man doth commit which he hath strength to avoid. Sometimes the word infirmity is taken largely, for all sin, which Jesus Christ our High Priest doth sympathize with us in. So Heb. iv.: "We have not such an high priest who cannot be touched with our infirmities." And thus all the sins of the godly may be and are sins of infirmity. But, properly and strictly, an infirmity is that sin which a man is taken captive by against his will, Rom. vii., that is, against the general bent and frame of his heart which he hath not present strength to resist. So Rom. xv. 1, "Ye which are strong ought to bear the infirmities of those that are weak." And thus every sin that a godly man commits is not a sin of infirmity.*

If you ask whether any sin that a wicked man doth com-

* The sins whereinto the godly falleth, are not presumptuous, but are ordinarily of weakness and infirmity.—Perkins' Cases, book i. chap. 2.

Peccatum ex infirmitate est, cujas est determinatur causa instigans, ita ut sine tali causa non fieret.—Corduba, lib. ii. quest. 8.

Ut peccatum sit ex infirmitate, ita debere fiere ex passione ut ipsa sit sufficiens causa qua ablata, tale peccatum non sequeretur.—Vasquez in 12. Co. 1, q. 77. art. 3.

mit be a sin of infirmity? I answer, No; because he hath no spiritual life, and infirmity is in one that hath life; and therefore a wicked man being dead, his sin that he commits cannot be called a sin of infirmity.*

If you ask whether any great, gross, foul, scandalous sin be or can be a sin of infirmity? I answer, No; because it is a sickness, as Austin well observes, and not a weakness; for, saith he, there is a great deal of difference between *ægrotus* and *infirmus*. If a man have some distemper and ailment in his body, and yet he bears up to his meat and to his work, he is not sick, but he hath an infirmity; this is weakness: but if a man have a distemper and illness in his body, whereby he is driven both from meat and work, and doth lie by it, then it is not an infirmity but a sickness. So spiritually, if a man have a failing, and yet through the grace of God he bears up to meat and work, it is an infirmity; but if he sin, and thereby be driven both from meat and work, through the commission of some gross sin, this is a sickness, this is no weakness or infirmity. So then, properly, the sin of infirmity is that sin which is committed by one that is spiritually alive unto God, and which doth arise from want of strength to resist, and not from will to commit. And thus you see, briefly, what the nature of this sin of infirmity is.†

But yet this doth not come near enough. When may a man be said to sin a sin of infirmity, and how shall I know whether my sin be of that rate of sins or no; for if the Lord will not cast a man off for a sin of infirmity, it concerns me to consider what kind of sins my sins are: there are some sins that God doth reject men for, as in the case of Saul, God rejected him for his sin; when may a man, therefore, be said to sin out of infirmity?

For answer unto this, First, I shall speak unto some mistakes. Secondly, I will speak something unto it negatively, and something affirmatively.

For mistakes. There are mistakes on both hands. Some think that the sins which they commit are not sins of in-

* Infirmity cannot properly be said to be in them, in whom sin hath firmity and strength, and where there is no power of grace at all.—Perkins' Cases, book i. chap. 2

† Sicut corpori noxium est escam corporalem non posse percipere, ita animæ periculosum est spiritales delitias fastidire.—Augustin.

firmity, when indeed they are; and some think that their sins are sins of infirmity when indeed they are not. Both on the right hand and on the left hand, men are mistaken about this matter.

On the left hand, men think that their sins are infirmities, when indeed they are not, and that upon a four-fold account because their sin is but small in bulk; or because that they are tempted and drawn into their sin by others; and because they do strive against their sin; and because they are troubled after it.

I think, will some say, that my sin is a sin of infirmity because it is but small. But if you look into 1 Sam. xv. you may read that Saul's sin, for which the Lord rejected him, was of no great outward bulk; for he spared the fatlings that he might sacrifice thereby; and though he spared the king Agag, it was neither murder that he committed, nor adultery, nor drunkenness; yet saith the Lord unto him, "Thy sin is as the sin of witchcraft." A great many small sins may make as great a bulk as one gross sin; yea, possibly there may be much sinfulness and evil in committing of a small sin; for as amongst men, it is the greatest incivility to break with another for a small matter; so with God, to break with God for a small thing, is a great unworthiness and ingratitude. Thus did Adam in eating the forbidden fruit; the smallness of the thing to be done aggravated his sin; and the smaller the thing is, the more unworthiness it is to break with God in so little; a small leak neglected may sink the ship, as well as the most boisterous and greatest wave: and much skill may be seen in a small work; a little watch, &c. So your skill in sinning may be seen in a small sin; his sin is never small that thinks it small. And if this be true, that there is no sin that a wicked man commits which is a sin of infirmity, because he is dead; then a man may commit a sin that is but small in the bulk, and yet no sin of infirmity.*

* Minuta peccata si negligantur, occidunt minutiæ sunt guttæ quæ flumina implent, minuta sunt grana arenæ, sed si multa arena imponatur, premit atque opprimit; hoc facit sentina neglecta, quod facit fluctus irruens, Paulatim per sentinam intrat sed diu intrando et non ex hauriendo mergit navim. August. Tom. vi. 9. Tract. 13. in Joan. 2.

Ne putemus parvum esse has culpas quæ sunt plures, arenulæ parvæ sunt sed

But I think my sin is a sin of infirmity becouse I am tempted to it, and because I am drawn on by others. But I pray, was not Adam tempted unto the eating of the forbidden fruit by Eve? And was not Eve tempted by Satan? And will you call that a sin of infirmity that condemned all the world as Adam's sin did? And I pray you, was not Aaron put upon making the golden calf by the people; and will you call that sin of idolatry a sin of infirmity? Possibly a man may be tempted, drawn unto sin by others, and put upon it by others, and yet the sin may be no sin of infirmity.

But I think my sin is a sin of infirmity because I do strive against it. And, I pray, did not Pilate strive against the crucifying of Christ? He would have delivered him from the Jews, calls for a bason of water, and washed his hands, saying, I am free from the blood of this man, used means, and did strive against it, and yet the sin of Pilate no sin of infirmity: Possibly therefore a man may strive against his sin, and yet the sin be no sin of infirmity.

But my sin is a sin of infirmity because I am troubled after it. And was not Esau troubled after he had sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage; did he not seek it with tears? And when Judas had betrayed his master, and our Saviour, it is said that he repented of what he had done, and was troubled. Surely then, though the sin that I commit, may be lesser in bulk, than another's sin, and small comparatively, and though I be drawn into it by others, and though I do strive against it, and though I am troubled after it, yet it may be no sin of infirmity. Yet, good Lord, how many poor souls are there that deceive themselves, and think that their sins are but sins of infirmity; and thus are mistaken on the left hand.

But as some are mistaken on the left hand, thinking that their sins are sins of infirmity, when indeed they are not:

tot possunt esse ut obruant citius quam saxum ingens, infirma res est una locusta sed quæ plaga maior agris quam multitudo illarum. Euseb. Nieremberg. de adoratione, Lib. ii. Cap. 13.

Cum Deus tantus sit nihil est parvum quod ei displicet aut quod ei placet quicquid est bonum statim est magnum quicquid malum statim hic non est parvum.

Non est parvum quod censetur minimum cum in minimis stet perfectio.

Erubesse te vinci a parvis nam ad hoste exili et pumilione sterni turpissimum et ignavi signum. Id. Cap. 14.

so others on the right hand are mistaken, and think that their sins are not sins of infirmity, but of a worse nature, when indeed they are: and that upon these accounts:

Because they sin knowingly.

Because they fall into the same sin again and again, and do lie therein.

Because they fall into the sin after admonition.

Oh, saith one, I fear my sin is no sin of infirmity, for I sin knowingly, and with deliberation; I sin against my knowledge, and against my conscience, and therefore my sin, can be no sin of infirmity.

But for answer hereunto, you must know, it is one thing for a man to sin knowingly, and another thing for a man to sin out of knowledge, or against his knowledge. As in the case of ignorance; it is one thing for a man to sin *ignoranter*, and another thing to sin *ex ignorantia*. A man sins ignorrantly when ignorance is the companion of his sin only: a man sins out of ignorance, when ignorance is the only cause of his sin, and not the companion only. As for example: Suppose a man be in fight, in a great battle, and he kill another; he kills him because he did not know him, if he had known him in the battle, he would not have killed him; here his ignorance is not the companion only, but the cause of it: so that it is one thing to sin ignorantly, and another thing to sin out of ignorance. A man sins ignorantly, when ignorance is the companion of his fact: a man sins out of ignorance, when ignorance is the cause of it. So a man sins knowingly, when knowledge is the companion of his fact: but a man sins out of knowledge, or he sins against knowledge, when knowledge is the cause thereof; as when a man doth use his knowledge to make distinctions and shifts for his sin, whereby he is emboldened to it, and continues in it. Knowledge is sometimes only a companion of sin; as when a man knows that the first risings of sin are evil; this knowledge is no cause of them, but merely a companion: sometimes knowledge is the cause of sin; as when a man doth know that his way is naught, and he doth deliberately consult and devise excuses and lies to hide the same; here his knowledge is the cause of those sinful excuses, and the man doth not only sin knowingly and with knowledge, but out of knowledge, and against his knowledge; and this cannot

stand with infirmity, but the former may: for the disciples knew that it was evil for them to sleep; yet their sin was a sin of infirmity.*

Oh, but I fear that my sin is no sin of infirmity, because I fall into it again and again, and do lie in it.

But do ye know what it is to lie in sin? there is much mistake about lying in sin. Possibly a man may lie in a sin, yet never fall into the gross acts thereof; he may lie in the breach of the seventh commandment, and yet never commit the gross act of adultery; he may lie in the sin of covetousness, yet never be any great oppressor. So on the other side, a man may possibly fall divers times into the same sin, and yet not lie therein; for properly a man is said to lie in sin, when he doth continue in it, and not purge it out; so he that is born of God sinneth not, because his heart is as a fountain or spring, that purifies itself from that dirt and filth of sin which doth fall into it: but as the apostle speaks, "The whole world lies in wickedness;" why? because a wicked man's heart is as a lake or standing pool, which keeps all that dirt which is thrown into it. Now if you do thus keep and lie in your sin, why do you so complain? this your complaining argues that there is some purging out, and therefore you do not lie in sin.

Oh, but I fear my sin cannot be a sin of infirmity, because I fall into it after I have been admonished of the evil of it.

To that I say no more, but desire you to consider the instance that is here before you. The disciples slept, our Lord and Saviour Christ comes and wakens them; yea, and he chides them too: "What (saith he) cannot ye watch with me one hour! watch and pray;" and yet they slept again: and he comes and wakens them again, and admonisheth them again, and yet they slept again. Possibly, therefore, a man may fall into the same sin again and again, yea, even after

* Adrian. sic definit peccatum ex infirmitate, est actus vel omissio culpabilis sine deliberatione propter passionis impetum facta: hac tamen definitione non complectitur omne peccatum ex infirmitate; nam potest peccatum ex infirmitate accidere cum deliberatione imo vero ut sit peccatum debet esse aliqua deliberatio Vasquez. xii. Q. 77. A. 3.

Utrum sit possibile quod aliquis sciens ex infirmitate peccat.

Dicendum quod communiter ab omnibus ponitur aliqua peccata ex infirmitate committi quæ a peccatis ex ignorantia non distinguerentur nisi contingeret aliquem scientem ex infirmitate peccare. Tho. Aquinas Quest. Disputat. de causa peccati. Art. ix. p. 96.

admonition, and yet it may be a sin of infirmity. Yet how many poor souls are there, that are mistaken here on the right hand, and do think that their sins are no sins of infirmity, when indeed they are.

But if there be such mistakes, how shall we then know whether our sins be sins of infirmity?

Negatively, That is no sin of infirmity, which is a gross, foul, scandalous sin, committed with deliberation and consultation. It is said of David, that he turned not aside to the right hand or to the left, save only in the matter of Uriah. It seems then, that in this matter he did turn aside; but why is it said that he turned aside here, and not in other things; did he not sin at other times? Yes, very often: but there is a difference between missing one's way, and turning aside out of one's way; a man may ignorantly miss his way, or unadvisedly, but he that turns aside out of his way, doth it voluntarily and deliberately: and so did David here in this case, and not in others; this act was a foul fact, which he was able and had strength to avoid, committed with much deliberation, and therefore it was no sin of infirmity. So that if a man's sin committed, be a gross, foul, scandalous sin, committed with deliberation and consultation, this is no sin of infirmity.

If the sin be a ringleader unto other foul sins, it is no sin of infirmity. The ringleading sin is the most heinous sin. You shall observe, therefore, that when Samuel was raised up, (whether it was true Samuel, or false, I will not now debate,) when he was raised up by the witch of Endor, 1 Sam. xxviii., the only sin that Samuel lays to the charge of Saul, is this, ver. 18, that he obeyed not the voice of the Lord, in executing his fierce wrath upon Amalek: "Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek (saith Samuel), therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines." If you read this story you shall find, that this only sin Samuel doth instance in. Saul had committed other sins, Saul had persecuted David, and out of malice, and had committed great sins; why doth Samuel instance in this sin above all other sins? but because this sin was the ringleading sin unto all the sins that Saul did commit; and therefore this is

charged upon him especially, as a great and a heinous sin. And you see how it is amongst men; if there be a rebellion or insurrection, they take the ringleader and hang up him, for say they, This is the great transgressor, for he is the ringleader. So amongst sins, the great sin is the ringleader; and therefore if your sin be a ringleader unto other foul sins, it is not a sin of infirmity.

A sin of presumption is not a sin of infirmity. Sins of presumption and sins of infirmity are set in opposition one to the other in Numb. xv. and Psalm xix. Now, I pray, when doth a man sin out of presumption, but when he sinneth because God is merciful; when he sinneth because his sin can and may stand with grace; when he sinneth because the sin is but an infirmity; when he sinneth because he shall repent afterwards? Now this is ordinary. I have read of a certain young man, who being admonished of the evil of his way and course, and pressed to leave his wickedness by the consideration of judgment, eternity and death a coming, that he said, Why tell ye me of these things; I will do well enough; for when death comes I will speak but three words, and will help all; and so he went on in the way of his sin: but in the end, coming to a bridge on horse-back, to go over a deep water, the horse stumbling, and he labouring to recover his horse, could not, but at last he let go the bridle, and gave up himself and horse to the waters, and was heard to say these three words: *Diabolus capiat omnia:* Devil take all. Here was three words indeed, and an example for all men who think to repent with a three word repentance at last, viz. *Miserere mei Deus;* Lord have mercy; to take heed by. Such is the end of presumption. And when a man doth therefore sin the rather because God is merciful, or because the sin is but a sin of infirmity, or because he hopes to repent afterward, or because his sin may and can stand with grace; this is a sin of presumption, and is no sin of infirmity: sins of presumption are no sins of infirmity.

Again, If the sin be a reigning sin, then it is no sin of infirmity, for when sin reigns, grace doth not; therefore saith the apostle, Rom. vi., "Let not sin have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace;" and when sin reigns it is in its full strength. Now a sin of infirmity is not therefore called infirmity because, as the schoolmen would, it

doth make a man infirm, by impeding and hindering the vital operations of the soul, for then all sins, and especially the greatest, should be sins of infirmity; but it is said to be a sin of infirmity, because it doth arise from weakness, the strength thereof being taken out and mortified; and therefore a reigning sin can be no sin of infirmity. Now sin reigneth in a man,*

1. When it hath the command of his duties, his spiritual duties. When a master commands a servant from his meat, it argues that he rules over him; and if you see a man rise from his meat at the command of another, you say, Surely this man is the other's servant, for he was at dinner or supper, and the other did but speak or come by him, and he took his hat and cloak, and left all his meat, and followed him. So when a man shall sit down to duty, and he shall ordinarily be commanded from his duty by his sin, what doth this argue, but that his sin is his master, and doth rule and reign over him.

2. When men do yield the members of their bodies as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, then sin reigns in them. "Let not sin reign in your mortal body (saith the apostle), that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin," Rom. vi. 12. 13.†

3. Sin reigns when it usually riseth by opposition. It was with sin as with grace; when grace is in power it riseth by opposition; "I will yet be more vile," saith David; and when the believing blind man was commanded to hold his peace, he cried so much the more, "Jesus, thou Son of Da-

* Potest autem dici infirmitas in anima ad similitudinem infirmitatis corporis, dicitur autem corpus esse infirmum, quando debilitatur vel impeditur in executione propriæ operationis propter aliquam inordinationem partium corporis ita scil. quod humores et membra hominis non subdantur virtuti regitivæ et motivæ corporis, unde et membrum dicitur infirmum esse, quando non potest perficere operationem membri sani: unde et infirmitas animæ dicitur quando impeditur anima in propria operatione propter inordinationem partium ipsius, partes autem corporis dicuntur esse inordinatæ, quando non sequuntur ordinem naturæ ita et partes animæ dicantur esse inordinatæ quando non subduntur ordini rationis, &c. —Thom. Aquin. xii. quest. 77. art. 3.

† Illicitæ delectationi si resistamus, si non consentiamus, si membra velut arma non ministremus non regnat peccatum in nostra mortali corpore peccatum enim ante regnum perdidit et sic perfit, in hac ergo vita, quantum ad sanctos attinet regnum perdit, in alia perit.—Augustin de Verbis Apost. Ser. 66.

vid, have mercy on me." Herein the power of godliness is distinguished from the form. Godliness in power rises by opposition, but the form doth not; but the power of faith doth, the power of love doth, and the power of repentance doth: even as a little fire is quenched with water, but if the fire be strong, it flames and burns out the more by that dish of water which ye do cast upon it. So in regard of sin, where it is in power it will not be quenched by opposition, but it flames out the more; witness that powerful malice of the Jews against Christ, who when they were but a little checked by Pilate, they cried out so much the more, Crucify him, crucify him. Doth thy sin, therefore, ordinarily rise by opposition? this argues that it is sin in power, that it reigns in thee, that it is no sin of infirmity; for a reigning, full-breathed sin is no sin of infirmity.* Thus negatively.

But how shall we know, then, affirmatively, whether our sin be a sin of infirmity?

Thus: If it do merely proceed from want of age in christianity, then it is, without doubt, a sin of infirmity. There are several ranks and forms of christians in the school of Christ. The apostle John doth allude unto three ages: "I write unto you fathers (saith he), I write unto you young men, and I write unto you babes." There are the grown children of God, and there are babes. Babes are weak and full of weaknesses. And if your sin be such as doth arise merely from want of age and time in grace, then it must needs be a sin of a babe, and so a sin of infirmity.

If it be no other sin than what is incident unto all the saints, then it is a sin of infirmity; for that sin which is committed by all the saints, is no reigning sin, but a sin mortified, enervated and weakened; there is no reigning sin in the child of God: sin reigning and being under grace are opposed, Rom. vi., "Let not sin have dominion over you, for ye are under grace." Those that are under grace have their sin at an under: and if the sin be committed by all the saints, then it doth rather arise from want of strength to resist than from will to commit. Is thy sin, therefore, no other than what is

* Manifestum igitur est quod credere improbabilia, fortitudinis est, atque vigoris nostri intellectus, sicut amare damnosa, molesta et ignominiosa fortitudines est et vigoris nostri affectus.—Parisiens. de fide, p. 2.

incident unto all God's people? then surely it is no other than a sin of infirmity.

If it be such a sin as you cannot avoid, which breaks in upon you before you are aware, even before you can call in for help from your reason and consideration, and which the general bent and frame of your heart and soul is against, then it is a sin of infirmity, for then it doth arise from want of strength to resist, and not from will to commit. This was the case of Paul, Rom. vii., when evil was present with him, being against the general bent and frame of his soul; for saith he, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man, and yet the thing that I would not do, that do I." Can you, therefore, say with Paul, "It is no more I that do it," &c, for my delight is otherwise, and the general bent and frame of my heart is otherwise? then you may also say, This is mine infirmity.*

If your sin be your burden, because it is the burden of your grace, then is your sin your infirmity. I speak not of gross, foul and scandalous sins. But the apostle tells us, Gal. vi., that this sin of infirmity is our burden, for having said in verse 1, "If any one be overtaken, you that are spiritual restore him," &c; he then gives the reason of it at verse 6, "Bear ye one another's burdens." It seems, then, that this sin of infirmity is a burden unto him that commits it. Now a man may be burdened with sin upon a twofold account: either because he is or shall be burdened with it, in regard of pain and punishment, or, because it is the luggage and burden of his grace and duty. In the first sense, all men may be burdened with sin, even the most wicked man: Cain was so burdened when he cried out, and said, "My sin (or burden) is greater than I can bear." In the second sense, only those are burdened with sin that are godly. Dost thou, therefore, groan under the burden of this evil, though it be no gross and scandalous sin, and that because it is a burden to your grace and duties? surely it is no other than a sin of infirmity.

* Hæc peccata quæ accidunt ratione operationis sensitivi prevenientis rationem, dici peccata ex infirmitate, nam infirmitas humanæ voluntatis contracta ex peccato originali magna ex parte consistit in rebellione appetitus, hoc est in illa potestate quam habet operandi ante usum rationis ex sola apprehensione sensus.—Caspens. Cursus Theolog. Tract. de Peccat. Disp. v. § 4.

Ego sum in carne, ego sum in mente, sed magis ego sum in mente quam in carne, et quia mens regit ego sum in regente.—August. de Verbis Apost. Serm. 5.

An infirmity will hardly acknowledge itself to be a sin of infirmity; but the person in whom it is, fears lest it should be worse. It is in this case as in the matter of temptation; though a wicked man's sins be his own, the brat of his own conception and corruption, yet he will hardly acknowledge them to be his own corruption: no, but saith he, These are the temptations of Satan and not mine own corruption: a good man, on the contrary, saith, Nay, but these are mine own corruptions, not the devil's temptations; oh, these are worse than temptations, they are all mine own. Witness David, 1 Chron. xxi. 8, "And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing, I have done very foolishly;" yet the devil provoked him to it, and it was originally his temptation, for it is said, verse 1, "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people." David doth not lay the fault upon the devil, but upon himself; he did not say, I was thus and thus tempted by Satan, no, but I, even I have sinned and done foolishly. Temptation will hardly acknowledge itself to be a temptation; and so infirmity will hardly acknowledge itself to be infirmity; but the person in whom it is, doth fear worse, saying, This my sin is great, and I fear it is no infirmity. Wicked men excuse their sin by infirmity, because it is no infirmity; but a good man fears it is worse than infirmity. And therefore is thy sin no gross and foul sin, and yet art thou afraid that it is worse than infirmity? this doth rather argue that it is no other than a sin of infirmity.

If your sin do arise chiefly from some outward cause, it is a sin of infirmity; for then it is not so much from will to commit, as from want of strength to resist. The sin which the apostle speaks of, Gal. vi. 1, is a sin of infirmity, and the man that commits it is said to be overtaken. Now when a man is upon his journey travelling and is overtaken by another person, his inward inclination and disposition was not to meet the other: so when a man is overtaken by sin, it argues that his sin doth proceed from some outward cause; and when it doth proceed from some outward cause, then he is truly said to be overtaken with it. It is true the worst of men say they are overtaken when they sin. Oh, saith the drunkard, I confess I was drunk at such a time, and in such a place, but I was drawn into it; my inward disposition was otherwise, but I was so and so overtaken. But if men were

only overtaken and surprized by their sin, then why are they angry with those who keep them from their sin? why are they in their own element, and never more at home than in the way of their sin? and why do they so heartily will that which is the cause of their sin? It may be they do not will the effect, namely, drunkenness, but do they not will that which is the cause thereof? He that is overtaken with a sin, is unexpectedly surprized with the cause thereof; and therefore if it be not a gross and scandalous sin, it is a sin of infirmity.

Infirmity loves admonition: I mean, the person that sins out of infirmity, loves to be admonished, takes admonition kindly, and doth bless God for it. Possibly the admonition may be given scalding hot, and so he may refuse to take it down; but ordinarily, he will take the admonition kindly. Ye know how it was with David, when he was going against the house of Nabal in a great passion: Abigail came forth to meet him, and having admonished him of his duty, he did not only forbear the evil intended, but he blessed God for her and her words, who kept him that day from shedding innocent blood. Tell an honest man that he is out of his way, and direct him into it, and he will thank you for it. Tell a thief that he is out of his way, and he will laugh at you. So, tell a wicked man that he is out of his way, and he will despise you for it; tell a good man that he is out of his way, and he will bless God for it, and for you: why? because he hath but missed his way. Canst thou, therefore, take an admonition kindly, when thou art out of thy way? This argues that thy sin is one of those infirmities, which Christ our great High Priest will forgive, "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he also was compassed with infirmities," Heb. v. 2.

An infirmity discovers good, though it be in itself evil; it is an ill sin, but a good sign. The thistle is an ill weed, yet it discovers a fat and a good soil; smoke is ill, but it discovers fire. So do the saints' infirmities; though they be in themselves weaknesses, yet they discover life. Moses was angry, but his anger did discover his zeal: Job was somewhat impatient, but his impatience did discover his innocency and his great goodness: Abraham failed in saying Sarah was his sister, but there was a faith which this unbelief grew upon:

the woman that came behind Christ, touching the hem of his garment, came fearing and trembling, discovering her unbelief; yet she discovered her faith therewithal: the disciples failed, when they said, "Lord, save us, carest thou not that we perish?" yet they discovered their faith too. Infirmity sometimes is an excrescence which doth grow out of duty, and upon duty. Doest thou therefore fail in thy duty, or exercise of thy grace; and doth thy duty go on, and thy grace go on? Though thy failing may be thy burden, yet it being but an excresence and discoverer of thy grace, it is no other than a sin of infirmity.

Sins of infirmities are servants and drawers of water unto your graces; though in themselves evil, yet through the overruling hand of God's grace, they will make you more gracious another way. Ye know how it is with a young tradesman, who hath but a small stock; he keeps his shop diligently, and will not spend as others do. If you ask him the reason, saying, Such and such men are of your trade, and they will spend their shilling with us, and their time with us; why will not you do as they? He answers presently, True, they do so, and they may do so, their estate will bear it; but as for me, my stock is small, very little, therefore I may not do as they do, but I must be diligent, and a good husband; I am but a young beginner, and have little skill in the trade, therefore it behoves me to be diligent. His very weakness is the cause of his diligence. So here, the more infirmities that a gracious soul labours under, the more diligent he will be; and if you ask him, Why do you take so much pains in following the means, and the like? he answers, Alas, I am a poor weak creature: such and such an one there is that hath an excellent memory, all that ever he reads or hears is his own; but my memory is naught, my head and heart is naught, and therefore by the grace of God I will take the more pains in following after Christ. Thus his very infirmity is a provocation unto all his diligence. The Gibeonites served the Israelites, and were hewers of wood and drawers of water for them; why? but because the Gibeonites were at an under. So now, if your very sins be drawers of water, servants, and handmaids to your graces, it argues that your sins are at an under; and being so, they are weak, and but

sins of infirmity, if they be not gross, foul, and scandalous sins.*

Infirmity doth constantly keep a man's heart low, down, and humble. If one have an infirmity in his speech, he will not be so forward to speak as others are; but being conscious of his own infirmity, he is always low, and afraid to speak. So spiritually. There are two sorts of sins that men do commit: some are foul, gross, and scandalous sins; others are weaknesses and infirmities: those that fall into great and gross sins, will be much troubled, much trouble and sorrow they do meet with presently, in case they repent; but those that lie under a constant infirmity, are constantly kept low and humble thereby.† Do you therefore complain of your sin, and would you know of what sort of sins it is? Why, if it be not a gross and scandalous sin, and thy heart be kept constantly low thereby, then without doubt it is no other than this sin of infirmity. For though God could have wholly delivered his people from the filth of sin, as well as from the guilt of it, and as well from lesser sins as from great and scandalous; yet he hath left these infirmities and weaknesses in the hearts and lives of his people, that they may be constantly humbled in themselves, and prize Christ the more. And if this be the manner of an infirmity, then surely a good man, a true disciple of Christ, may possibly fall into the same sin again and again, and yet the sin be but a sin of infirmity. Which was the second thing proposed to be cleared by us.

But suppose that my sin be no other than a sin of infirmity, what then?

* Mirabilis Deus in consiliis super filiis hominum, multos per peccata sanat a peccatis, sicut venenum pellitur a veneno.—Luther.

Non solum mala passiva, quæ nobis irrogantur, in bonum cedunt, sed etiam activa, hoc est, mala quæ nos ipsi facimus; quorsum hoc inquis? quia homo pius cum videt lapsum suum, pudesit, et confunditur, sic lapsus ille principio operatur humilitatem, deinde invocationem ardentum, ac malum illud quod in carne reliquam est ceu calcar est quod nos excitat, ut nobis ipsis irascamur, nos damnemus et clamemus cum Paulo. Infelix ego, quis me liberabit a corpore hujus peccati, sic crescit fides occasione vitiorum, &c.—Luther, Com. 2. Gen. fol. 151, in cap. 20.

† Datus est mihi stimulus carnis, ne extollar inquit Paulus, o venenum quod non curatur nisi veneno; caput cædebatur ne caput extolleretur o antidotum quasi quod de serpente conficitur et propterea theria cum dicitur.—Augustin de verbis Apost. Serm. 3.

The third particular answers you. Then, your sin being but an infirmity, Christ will never leave you for it, nor cast you off for it; but if you sleep, he will waken you; and if you sleep again, he will waken you again; and if you yet sleep again, he will come again with his wakening mercy, and will never cast you off for it. Oh, what sweet grace is this.

Is there no evil then in this sin of infirmity?

Yes, much, very much: for though it be a drawer of water to your grace, yet it is a Gibeonite, a native, a Canaanite, that will upon all occasions be ready to betray you, and to open the door unto greater thieves, and will always be a thorn and goad in your sides; and though it do not put out your light, yet it is a thief in your candle, which may smear out much of your comfort, and blemish your duty. Ye know how it is with a good writing pen; if there be a small hair in it, though the hair be never so little a thing, yet if it be not pulled out, it will blot and blemish the whole writing sometimes. So may the sin of infirmity do; your whole duty may be blotted and blemished by this small hair, and although God can and doth make use of your infirmities for to keep your graces, yet they are but your lees and dregs, whereas your graces should be all refined. The word of God is as gold refined seven times; your ordinances are refined ordinances, refined by the hand of reformation; your comforts and mercies and privileges, are refined mercies, privileges and comforts: surely therefore your graces should be refined graces, and your duties refined duties. When Christ "shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, he shall purify the sons of Levi as gold and silver, and then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord," Mal. iii. 3, 4. Oh, what an evil thing therefore is it, for a man to be unrefined. Is it not an evil thing to be burdensome unto others? By your sin, though it be but an infirmity, you may be a burden to others; for the apostle speaking of infirmities saith, "Bear ye one another's burdens," Gal. vi. 1, 6; and, "Ye that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," Rom. xiv. 1. And although Christ will not cast you off for a sin of infirmity, yet you may provoke him thereby to chide you, and to be angry with you. The unbelief of the disciples was but their infirmity, yet Christ did upbraid them because of their unbelief. The remissness and loss of first love

in the church of Ephesus, is by Christ called a *somewhat*, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee;" and yet Christ threatens her, that he will for this somewhat come against her quickly, and remove her candlestick, if she did not repent. And, Rev. ii. 16, the Lord Christ threatens the church of Smyrna, that unless she repented, he would come unto her quickly: yet he saith not to her, I have many things, but a few things against thee; or if you will, for the word is ολιγα, I have some small or little things against thee. So that although your sin be not of so great a bulk as others, yet you may provoke Christ thereby, and he may be angry, and chide you for it. Thus here he did chide the disciples, yet their sin was but a sin of infirmity. Surely, therefore, there is evil, and much evil in the sin, though it be but a sin of infirmity. But,

Thirdly, Though there be much evil in this sin, Christ will not cast you off for it.

For it is an honour to a man to pass by infirmities, saith Solomon; much more is it for the honour of Christ to pass by the infirmities of his people.

The saints and people of God are in covenant with God by Jesus Christ, and that covenant is a conjugal covenant. Hosea ii. But what husband will put away his wife for her infirmities? That covenant is a paternal covenant, and what father will thrust his child out of doors for his infirmities? A child, though deformed, is more pleasing to the father, because the child is his own, than another beautiful child that is not his own. Yea, that covenant is a covenant of grace: now in the covenant of works, the least sin breaks the covenant; but in the covenant of grace, the greatest sin doth not break the covenant between God and the soul: in the covenant of works, the least sin provokes God to hatred; in the covenant of grace, the greatest sin provokes and moves God to pity. If a master should turn away his servant for every failing and weakness, who would serve him? But God hath many servants in the world, who do serve him with cheerfulness; surely, therefore, he doth not and he will not cast men off for their infirmities.

The saints and people of God are the body of Christ; and every one a member of that mystical body, whereof our Lord Christ is the head. Now, saith Luther, what man will

cut off his nose, because there is filth in it? yea, though the nose be the sink of the brain, yet because it is a member a man will not cut it off.* And will Christ cut off one of his members, because there is filth in him, or some weakness and infirmity in him? No, surely. What woman will cast away the mortar, because it savours of the onions, or garlick which hath been beaten in it? What father will knock his child on the head, because a wart grows on his forehead? These infirmities in the saints and people of God, are their warts, which grow in the face of their conversation: the blessed martyrs themselves had these warts: Hierom of Prague had a great wart upon him, Cranmer another, Jewel another; yea, if we look into that little book of Chronicles, I mean Heb. xi., what saint is there mentioned upon record, but had one wart or another? Had not Abraham his wart, in saying, that Sarah was his sister? Had not Sarah her's in laughing? Had not Jacob, Isaac, and Joseph their's? Moses, Rahab, Samson, Jepthah, and David their's? Luther had his, and our reformers their's; yet God owned, used, and honoured them. Surely therefore, though there be much evil in a sin of infirmity, especially if a man fall into it again and again; yet Christ will not leave a man, or cast him off for it.†

But Solomon tells us, that the backslider in heart shall be satisfied with his own ways.

True: But there is much difference between the backsliding of an hypocrite, and the relapses of God's own children into their infirmities: a backslider loseth that power which once he had; but a good man relapsing into his infirmities, doth still keep that power of godliness which he had before: a backslider's judgment and principles crack and

* Nemo nasum ideo abjicet quod impuro phlegmate abundat, et quasi cloaca cerebri, ita etiam infirmi temporis infirmitatis sunt pars regni Christi qui non ideo abjiciendi sed so vendi sanandi et erigendi sunt.—Luther.

† Ego non possum excusare patres ut multi faciunt nec volo, imo libenter audio lapsus et infirmitates sanctorum non quod laudem, &c. sicut non excuso apostolos fugientes a Christo, Petrum negantem et alias eorum infirmitates, stultitias et ineptias, nec scribuntur ista propter duros super bos et obstinatos sed ut ratio regni Christi ostendatur qui in grege suo pusillo habet pauperes et infirmus conscientias; est rex fortium paritur et infirmorum, &c.—Luther in Gen. xxvi.

Scio ego me sæpe multa stulte et temere admodum egisse adeo ut cogitarem cur Deus, vocavit me ad predicandum &c.—Luther in Gen. xxvii.

alter, insomuch as he doth bless himself in his apostacy; but the good man relapsing into his infirmities, still doth retain his judgment, keep his principles, and doth groan under his relapses. Possibly a man may fall into the same sin again and again, yet he may be no backslider, nor called a backslider in scripture language.

But again, A man may be said to be satisfied with his own ways either because he is given up to his sins, so as to be glutted with them, finding all delight and contentment in them; or he is said to be satisfied with his own ways, in regard of that sorrow and affliction which he doth reap by them: in this sense a good man may have enough of his sin, and be said to be satisfied with his own ways. Thus it with Jacob; he deceived his brother Esau, and he deceived his father Isaac; afterwards he was deceived by Laban, and by his children; as he deceived his own father, so was he deceived by his father-in-law; and as he deceived his brother, so was he deceived by his children, in the reports of Joseph's death: here was he satisfied in a way of sorrow with his own ways; he deceived others, and was deceived by others: he had enough of it. But though a good man may be thus satisfied with his own ways, yet he is never satisfied with them, so as to be given up to them. Possibly he may fall into them again and again, yet saith the Lord, Isa. lvii. 17, "For the iniquity of his covetousness, was I wroth, and smote him; I hid my face and was wroth:" What then? "And he went on frowardly, turning aside again, (so the Hebrew,) in the way of his heart." But, saith the Lord, "I have seen his ways, and will heal him, and will lead him also, and restore comforts to him, and his mourners." So that though a good man may have enough of his sin, in regard of sorrow that may come thereby: yet he shall never be satisfied with his own ways, or sins, so as to be given up to them: Christ will not cast him off; if he sleep, Christ will waken him; and if he sleep again, Christ will wake him again; Christ will not leave him in it, nor cast him off for it.

If these things be true, then what necessity is upon us, and what great cause have we to examine ourselves, and to consider seriously, what sort of sins those sins are, which we labour under. We do all sin, that is most certain; but there is a great difference between sin and sin: there is a

sin unto death, and there is a sin not unto death: there is a sin which may stand with grace, and there is a sin which cannot stand with grace: there is the spot of the godly, and there is the spot of the wicked: there is a gross sin, a reigning sin; and there is a sin of infirmity: there is a sin, for which God will leave and cast off the sinner, witness Judas's sin, the sin of the false disciple: and there is a sin for which God will not cast one off; witness the sin of these true disciples: oh, then what cause have we to make it out to our own souls, whether our sins be sins of infirmity or not.

But it seems that all the sins of the godly are not sins of infirmity, and God will not cast off a godly man for any sin: what advantage, therefore, hath this sin of infirmity above other sins; or what disadvantage do the other sins of the godly labour under, which this sin of infirmity doth not?

Much, very much: for though my sin be great; yet if it be a sin of infirmity, it shall not hinder the present acceptance of my duty. Hezekiah and the people were not prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary, that was his and their weakness; but he prayed, and the Lord heard his prayer: so David said in his haste, "I am cast out of thy sight;" this was his infirmity, yet he prayed withal; and saith he, "Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication." But if a man, a good man, do fall into a foul, gross, and scandalous sin, though the Lord pardon it to him afterward, yet it will suspend his present communion with God.

Although my sin be great, yet if it be but an infirmity, it shall not hinder the sense of my justification. A foul and scandalous breach upon our sanctification, will make a breach upon the sense of our justification: but though the sin be great, yet if it be but an infirmity, it shall not make a breach upon the sense of our justification.

Though my sin be great, yet if it be but an infirmity, there is a pardon that lies in course for it; and though it be good to repent of every sin, with a distinct, and particular repentance, yet it is not necessary that there should be a particular repentance for every sin of infirmity. If a man, though a good man, do commit a gross, foul, and scandalous sin, there must be a particular repentance for it; and without that,

there will be no peace, no true peace in his soul: but if the sin be only a sin of infirmity, a general repentance may, and will serve for that; "Who knows the errors of his life?" saith David; "Lord cleanse thou me from my secret faults."

Though a man's sin be great, yet if it be but an infirmity, it shall never bring a scourge upon his family. It is a great misery to a good parent, to see his family scourged for his sin. Possibly the sins of a godly man may bring a rod on his family: "Because of this," saith the Lord to David, "the sword shall never depart from thine house." But now if the sin be only a sin of infirmity, my family shall never be scourged for that.

And though my sin be great, yet if it be but a sin of infirmity, it shall never spoil my gifts, nor make them unprofitable: if a man have great gifts, praying, exercising gifts, and his life be scandalous, what saith the world? Aye, this man hath exceeding good gifts indeed, but do ye see how he lives? A scandalous life soils and spoils his gifts, and doth make them unuseful. But now if my sin be only a sin of infirmity, it shall never soil my gifts, so as to make them unuseful and unprofitable unto others. Surely then, there is a great, and a vast difference between this sin of infirmity, and another sin; and therefore why should we not labour to make it out with clearness to our own souls, what kind of sins our sins are? Every man almost thinks that his sin is a sin of infirmity: come to the drunkard, swearer, adulterer, opposer, and these will tell you, that their sins, are but sins of infirmity; they will rail at and oppose the people of God, and yet their sins are but sins of infirmity; swear, and swear daily, yet their sins are but sins of infirmity; go to the tap-house, play-house, whore-house, and yet their sins but sins of infirmity: the vilest of men think their sins are only infirmities. But is there such a great difference between sins and sins; this, and the other sins? Then why should we not look wishly into our condition; consider our ways, and labour to make it out with clearness to our own souls, whether our sins, be sins of infirmity, or not?

But suppose that upon due search and examination, I find that my sin is no other than a sin of infirmity, which will not cast me off, although through my weakness, I do fall into it again and again, what then?

Then several duties follow, and accordingly you are to take up these, and the like gracious resolutions.

If my sin be a sin of infirmity, and no other, then through grace, will I observe what God's design is, in suffering and leaving such infirmities in me, and will labour what I can and may, to promote and advance that design: God could have freed me from all sin, these infirmities as well as the greater; but God had some great designs in leaving of these infirmities, as that I may be always humbled, that I may be always upon the work of mortification, that Jesus Christ may be the more sweet and precious to me, that I may live in continual dependance on him, that I may not gather up the assurance of my salvation only from my sanctification, but from the free grace of God, and his absolute promise, that I may be weary of my present state, and groan after heaven, where no imperfections are; and that I may learn to pity others, and therefore through grace, I will do what I can to help on these designs.*

If my sin be but a sin of infirmity, and God will not cast me off for it, then, through the grace of God, will I never believe these false reports of Christ, and those misrepresentations of him which Satan would put upon him, whereby he would persuade me and others, that our Lord Christ is an hard master: as Satan doth labour to present himself to me as an angel of light, so he would represent Christ as an angel of darkness. But is this true, that the Lord will not cast me off for my sins of infirmity? then will I never believe that my dear Saviour is an hard master.

If the Lord Christ will not cast me off for my sins of infirmity, then, through the grace of God, I will not question my spiritual estate and condition for every sin; I will grieve for every sin of infirmity because it is a sin, but I will not question my condition, because it is but a sin of infirmity.

Then will not I cast off myself and others for the sins of

* Deletur iniquitas manet infirmitas. Augustin.

Sed quare Deus talia peccato sinit fieri a suis, cur sic impingere eos permittit? respondetur ex effectis, ideo ita permittit Deus ut occasionem accipiat multarum bonarum rerum non enim labantur sancti ut pereunt sed ut copiose eis Deus benefaciat. ut lapsus principio operatur humiliatem, deinde invocationem ut nos excitat ut nobis ipsis irascamur et nos damnemus, ut majori studio caveamus. Luth. in Gen. cap. xx.

infirmities. Shall Christ's eye be good and shall my eye be bad? Will not Christ cast me off for mine infirmities, and shall I cast off others for their infirmities? God forbid.

Then will not I cast off the things of Christ because of any infirmity that may adhere to them, or the dispensation of them. When Christ took our nature on him, his deity was veiled under our humanity, his excellency under our infirmity. So now, his grace and his dispensations are veiled under the infirmity of our administrations: as for example: preaching is an ordinance of Christ, yet the sermon may be so delivered, with so much weakness of the speaker, that the ordinance of Christ may be veiled under much infirmity. So the admonition of a fallen brother is an ordinance of Christ, yet it may be so administered, with so much passion in the speaker, that this ordinance may be veiled under much infirmity. Scarcely any ordinance but is veiled under some infirmity in regard of its administration. But is this true, that the Lord will not cast me away because of mine infirmities? surely, then, I will never cast away the ordinances, or things of Christ, because of those infirmities which may adhere or cleave unto them.

And if the Lord will not cast me off for my infirmities, then, through grace, I will never be discouraged from the performance of any duty. I will pray as I can and hear as I can, and though I be not able to pray as I would, I will pray as I am able; and though I am not able to examine mine own heart as I would, yet I will do what I am able, for the Lord will not cast me off for infirmities, and therefore I will not cast off my duties because of them.

And, lastly, if the Lord Jesus Christ will not cast me off for mine infirmities, then will I never sin because the sin is but a sin of infirmity. Will the Lord pardon my sin because it is but an infirmity, and shall I commit sin upon that ground, because it is but an infirmity? then shall I walk contrary to God, then shall I turn the grace of God into wantonness. Surely, therefore, I will never sin upon that account, because it is but a sin of infirmity. Thus ye see what we are to do, and what gracious resolutions we are to take up from the consideration of this great truth.

But though the Lord will not cast us off for our sins of infirmity, yet there is much evil in this sin, especially if we

fall into it again and again; what shall we therefore do that we may not fall into this same sin so often?

Be sure that you do not forget your former sins; the slumber of grace is a preparation to sin, and the forgetfulness of a former sin is a preparation unto future sin. When we forget our old sins, then God leaves us to fall into new sins. As long as the sense of old sins abide upon your heart, so long you will be kept from new sins; and as the sense of old sins doth wear off, so the lust after new sins will come on. Would you not, therefore, fall into the same sin again and again? then take heed that you do not forget your old sins, or lose the sense thereof.

If you would be kept from relapses into your infirmities or other sins, then take your sin and quench it in the blood of Christ by a fresh act of faith, over and beyond all your resolutions and acts of humiliation. You know how it is with a candle; if it be blown out only, it is easily lighted again, but if you quench it in water, it is not so easily lighted again: so in regard of sin; if a man blow it out with a resolution, it will be soon recovered, but if besides a man's resolutions and humiliations, he takes his sin, and by an act of faith doth quench it in the blood of Christ, it will not be lighted again with that ease and facility.

And if you would not fall into the same sin again and again, then watch and pray. Our Saviour Christ here saw that his disciples were like to sleep again and again; and, I pray you, what direction doth he give them? only this, "Watch and pray:" as if watching with prayer, and prayer with watchfulness, were the only or chief means to keep us from falling into the same sin again and again. And indeed it is not all our habitual strength that can keep us from falling, for then Adam in the state of innocency would have been kept from falling; nor is it want of temptation that can secure us from falling, for then the angels in heaven should not have fallen, for they had no temptation there; but we are kept by continual dependance upon God in Christ: it is not therefore enough to watch, but we must watch in prayer; neither is it enough to pray, but we must pray with watchfulness. What I say, therefore, to one, I say to you all, and to mine own soul, Let us watch and pray, and pray and watch, that we enter not into this temptation.

SERMON XI.

THE FALSE APOSTLE TRIED AND DISCOVERED.

PREACHED A. D. 1656.

"*And hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.*"—REV. ii. 2.

IT is not only the opinion of Mr. Brightman, but of very ancient writers,* that these seven epistles, written to the seven churches of Asia, do contain the state and condition of the whole church of God, unto the coming of Christ. This first epistle is written to languishing Ephesus, holding forth the state of the church presently after Christ and his apostles, and is a good looking-glass for all those which begin now to languish, and to lose their first love. Something our Saviour doth commend in this church, and something he reproves them for. He commends them for what was good, and rebukes them for what was evil. Some will commend what is good in their friends, but will not take notice of what is evil. Some will take notice of what is evil in others, but will not commend what is good. This is not according unto Christ's proceeding; the commendation of good, is a good introduction to the reprehension of what is evil.

Now our Saviour Christ doth commend this church, both officers and people, for many things. For their labour; for their patience; for their zeal. "I know thy works, (saith he,) and thy labour, and thy patience." Labour and patience go together. Those that will labour in the work of God, must be patient; they shall surely meet with opposition, and therefore patience must accompany our labours. Yet this patience does not exclude zeal; but saith Christ here, "I know thy labour, and thy patience, and thy zeal: thou canst not bear them that are evil." Possibly then, a man may be

* In Joannis Apocal. septem ecclesias scribitur per quas una catholica designatur.—Greg. Hom. 15, in Ezek.

Joannes scribit ad septem ecclesias, in quibus etiam universas ecclesias septenario numero intelligimus commendari. Austin Epist. 106, Extra septem ecclesias quicquid foris est alienum est optat.—Milevitan, lib. 2.

patient, and yet cannot bear or endure those that are evil. Now this zeal and severe dealing with those that were evil, is described two ways: first, by the persons which they did deal withal, those were false teachers, ver. 2, 6; secondly, by the exercise of their zeal and severity, which did consist in two things, the discovery of those false teachers, and the hatred of their deeds. The hatred of their deeds ye have at ver. 6, "This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans;" the discovery of these false teachers ye have in these words, "And thou hast tried them," &c.

It is strange that there should be false apostles in those days, whilst some of the true apostles were alive to confute and discover them. But it seems that the discovery of these false apostles, was not a work only belonging to the true apostles, for this church of Ephesus found them out, and are commended for it by our Saviour Christ. And so the doctrine from this part of the verse is:

That it is a matter of great commendation in the eyes of Jesus Christ, to try and discover false teachers, or false apostles.

Christ doth not only commend this church for their zeal herein, but hath left their commendation upon scriptural record, as a good example for all the churches of Christ. And therefore, I say, the discovery of false teachers and false apostles, is still a matter of great commendation in the eyes of Christ.

It is that which we are all commanded to do, 1 John iv. 1, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone into the world."

But for the clearing of this truth, it will appear, if you consider,

What a dangerous and mischievous people, false teachers and false apostles are. They do deceive men in the matter of their souls; they are called deceivers and seducers, John ii. 7, "Many deceivers are entered into the world," &c. 2 Tim. iii. 13; "But evil men, and seducers, shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." And deceitful workers, 2 Cor. xi. 13, 6, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers." Now a man loves not to be deceived in any thing, no, not in a small matter. If I had spent or given

away much more, it would never have grieved me, you say; but I cannot endure to be cheated and deceived. And if a man cannot endure to be deceived in lesser things, what an evil thing is it then to be deceived in the matters of his soul? Such are the things that these false teachers do deceive men in; yea, they will and do subvert men's faith, and spoil them of the very fundamentals of their religion. Therefore saith the apostle, Col. ii. 8, "Beware lest any man spoil, or make a prey of you." Is it not a sad thing for a man to lose his faith for a fable? They will first take away your faith, and then they will lay a fable in the room of the faith; for their highest speculations and notions are but fables. Ye may observe, therefore, that when the apostle Paul doth dehort from their doctrine, he saith still, "Take heed and beware of fables." Those are many, and of divers sorts. There are old wives' stories and fables; such are the doctrines and speculations of false teachers. Therefore, 1 Tim. iv. 1, the apostle having said, that in the latter times some should depart from the faith, "giving heed to seducing spirits;" and speaking of the doctrines of those seducers, in the following verses, he saith, ver. 7, "But refuse thou profane and old wives' fables:" for such in the eyes of God are the doctrines of these seducers. There are Jewish fables also, whereof the Talmud is now full; and such are all those doctrines and commandments of men, which are beside the Scripture, the doctrines of false teachers: and therefore saith the apostle, Tit. i. 14, having spoken of seducers in the former verse, whose mouths must be stopped, "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men." There are also the fables of heathen poets, the figments and devices of men's own brains: and such are the doctrines and speculations of all false teachers. And therefore says the apostle, 2 Pet. i. 16, "We have not followed cunning and devised fables; but we have a more sure word of prophecy," at ver. 19. So that look whatever doctrine is not according to the Scripture, is but a fable in the eyes of God. Now is it not an evil thing to lose my faith for a fable? Such fables do these false teachers bring; they steal away your faith, and lay a fable in the room thereof; yea, they will and do beguile men of their reward; they beguile them of their faith; they beguile them of their souls, and they beguile them of their reward; there-

fore saith the apostle Paul, "Let no man beguile you of your reward," Col. ii. 18. Yea, they will not only beguile you of your reward, but they will bring you into pernicious ways, which if you follow, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2: in which scripture the apostle Peter tells us, that as false prophets did arise in the times of the old testament, so false teachers should arise in the times of the new testament. He tells us, that the ways of these false teachers are pernicious ways. That they shall infect many, for he saith, "Many shall follow them." That by reason of them, the ways of truth shall be evil spoken of. Surely then, this sort of people are a very dangerous and mischievous people, and therefore a commendable thing in the eyes of Christ to make discovery of them. But,

Though they be a dangerous and mischievous people, yet it is an hard thing to discover them, for they walk in the dark, and transform themselves into ministers of light; they creep, and they privily creep into houses, saith the apostle; and they will come to you, saith our Saviour, in sheep's clothing, Matt. vii.* That is, look whatever garb the true prophet was or is found in, that will they be found in also. Did the true prophets of the old testament go in a plain or rough garment, or a garment of hair, 2 Kings i. 8, Matt. iii. 4? so did the false prophets also, Zech. xiii. 4, wear a rough garment, or a garment of hair, as the Hebrew, to deceive. Did the true prophets sometimes quake, shake and tremble? so did the wicked diviners also. And so now in the times of the new testament. Do the true teachers of the gospel press or make use of Scripture? so do false teachers also. Did the true apostles preach Christ? so did the false apostles also: "Some preach Christ out of envy," Phil. i. 15, 16. Did the true apostles and prophets declare the deep things of God? 1 Cor.

* Induti speciem ovium, id est mentientes ovinam fraudisque nesciam simplicitatem, vestimenta igitur ovium sunt ea omnia, quæ sunt proprie ovium, hujusmodi vestimenta sunt perpetua verbi Dei et evangelii inclamatio, densissima, scripturarum citatio, mansuetudo, blandiloquium sanctimoniæ species, &c.—Luc. Brugens. in Matt. vii. 15.

Vestes ovium sunt: 1. Sophisticus verbi pretextus, Matt. iv. 2. Nomen ecclesiæ, Jer. vii. 3. Hypocrisis in vita, Col. ii. 4. Ficti enthusiasmi, Col ii. 5. Miracula, 2 Thess. ii. 6. Excellentia dona, Matt. vii. 7. Fortitudo in simplicitis. 8 Χρηστολογιαι και ευλογιαι, blanditiæ et promissiones —Strigel. in Matt. vii. p. 64.

ii. 10; so did the false prophets also, Rev. ii. 24, "the depths of Satan as they speak." Look what that is which the true preachers do, that will false teachers in appearance do. On a time, says Austin in his Confessions,* the house where I lived was broken up in the night by thieves; and the men of the house perceiving that the house was beset with thieves, and making a noise, the thieves run away, and left their crows of iron and instruments whereby they did break up the house. Then my friend Alipius coming to the house, and finding those instruments and tools lying on the ground, he took the crow of iron into his hand; and when the men of the house came out, and saw the crow of iron in his hand, they took hold of him, and thought that he was the thief. So, says another, the heretics of the times will take the same instruments to destroy the house of God as we do to build the same. The same crow of iron, the same scripture that is in the hand of Alipius, a friend, is made use of by a heretic, one that is a thief, who comes to make a prey of your faith. He that comes not in by the door, is *fur et latro*, a thief and a robber: not *apertus hostis*, an open or professed enemy, but a secret thief and a robber, whose coming is unknown, and of whom you can less be aware: and you know the more crafty and subtle they are in their practices, the more hardly they will be discerned. Now false teachers, who come in sheep's clothing, are a subtle and crafty generation; for as Satan at the first beguiled Adam by beginning with Eve, the weaker vessel; so do these people also creep into houses, leading silly women captive, laden with divers lusts; there they begin, even with the weaker vessel, as Satan at the first did; and as Satan beguiled Eve, by telling her that she should be like unto God himself, and so drew her from the appointment of God; so do false teachers now tell poor souls, that if they will follow their doctrines, they shall be like to God, yea, be God and Christ, and so draw them from the appointments of Christ; and therefore saith the apostle, "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 3. Now if it be so hard a thing to discover these false teachers, and they be so dangerous and

* Augustini Confess. lib. vi. cap. 9.

mischievous a people, then surely it is a matter of great commendation to make discovery of them.

It is an excellent thing also to make discovery of them; Christ doth commend what is excellent, spiritually excellent, and the more excellent the thing the more it doth fall under the commendation of Christ. Now by discovering of these false teachers, you put a stop and check unto their folly and madness; their madness or folly, saith the apostle, shall proceed no further. How so? It shall be made known to all: 2 Tim. iii. 9, "But they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be made manifest to all men." Thereby, also, ye shall preserve those who are not declined; and thereby you shall be serviceable unto Christ in the great work which he hath to do and is doing in these latter times. One part of his work is to discover those that are unsound: Rev. ii. 24, "Then shall all the churches know that I am he that searcheth the heart and reins." But did not the churches know that before? Yea, but then, that is, in the latter times, they shall have experience of it, for then I will discover Jezebel and all her false prophets; so that this discovery of false teachers is part of Christ's own work in the latter days, and the more you labour therein, the more serviceable you are unto Christ. Surely, therefore, it is a matter of great commendation in the eyes of Christ, to try, find out and discover false teachers and false apostles.

If it be so commendable in the eyes of Christ to discover these persons, then it is lawful for us, though weak, to go to the meetings of these false teachers, or to receive them into our houses, and to speak with them; else how shall I try and discover them?

Nay, but this follows not, no more than that you must go to Rome to try and find out the deceits of the papists, or that you must go into Turkey to try and find out the false doctrine of the Turks; you may try and discover papists and Turks, yet it doth not follow that you must read over their books and Alcoran. The apostle saith, "Mark those which cause division, and avoid them. False teachers shall arise in the last days (saith he), and from such turn away." And the apostle John saith, "If any come to you not with this doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor bid him God speed," lest you be partaker of their evil deeds. Look, what-

ever mischief they shall do abroad by their false doctrines, all that shall you partake in if you receive them into your houses, or countenance them by bidding them God speed. He that receiveth a true prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive that prophet's reward; he shall profit by that prophet, and shall have a share in all the good which he doth. So he that receiveth a false prophet, shall receive a false prophet's reward; he shall be poisoned by him, and shall partake in his evil deeds.

But how then shall I try all things?

Mark this scripture well. Those words are spoken to the church of the Thessalonians, 1 Epist. v. 20, 21, "Despise not prophesyings, prove all things;" that is, try those things which ye hear in the church by way of prophesy; but he doth not say that you must run out to every meeting of suspected persons to try all things there, but keep your place in the church, and try all things; otherwise, it being a commandment, all men should be bound to read Popish books, Socinian books, and the Turkish Alcoran. And if you should go to these meetings, do you think that is the way to try all things? Do ye not know that it is the ordinary way of all false teachers, to hold out truth at the first? Will they not preach an hundred truths first, that they may make way to one error? And if so, how can you try them by going to a meeting or two? But keep your station in the church of God, despise not, turn not your back on prophesyings, and so try all things. If you be convinced of the truth and way of God by the Scripture, you will easily find out a false doctrine, for *rectum est index sui et obliqui;* truth known will discover error. But where do you find in Scripture that trying is the end of hearing: that we are to hear that we may try? I must therefore go to hear that I may learn and profit by my hearing; and if you go to these meetings that you may learn and profit, are you not in a fair way to be deceived by them? The members of the church of Ephesus, here, did not run from the church for this discovery, for says the apostle, Acts xx. 30, "And of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things;" which, when it came to pass, the Ephesians did discover them, saith our text, for which they were thus highly commended of Christ.

Now if this be so commendable in the eyes of Christ,

then why should we not all take some pains herein, and be found doing this work of our generation? Do ye think that there are no false teachers, and false apostles, and false prophets, in these days of ours? Read what is said in Zech. xiii. 2—6. 1. The prophet tells us, that in the days immediately before the calling of the Jews, there shall be unclean spirits in the land, verse 2, and false prophets, verse 3. 2. He tells us, that when the Jews shall be called, in that day, verse 1, there shall be so great a zeal amongst them, against these false prophets, that their parents, and such as are near to them, shall be the first that shall punish them, verse 3, "His father and mother that begat them, shall say, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies;" and yet these are high gospel times. 3. He tells us here, that this correction shall be a means to reduce them; for upon that it is said, verse 4, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophet shall be ashamed," &c. But the thing that I bring this scripture for, is to shew you, that there shall be such people as these, immediately before the call of the Jews, and that is in these days of ours. Only observe how the prophet doth here describe them: He tells you that they shall be such as were originally husbandmen; for upon their reducement, he shall say, "I am no prophet, I am an husbandman." He tells you here, that they shall be such as shall wear a rough, hair, or plain garment to deceive, verse 4. He tells you, that they shall come in the name of the Lord, and say, they are not sent by men, but by God immediately, verse 3. That yet these men shall be acted by the very spirit of the devil; for says the Lord, "I will cause the false prophet, and the unclean spirit, to pass out of the land;" that is, such as do work and act by the inspiration of the devil, having the fierce and unclean spirit of the devil: these are the men that shall arise in these days of ours. Do you think then, that we are free from false teachers now; or do you think that it is not incumbent upon all; only upon officers, to try and discover them? Here the whole church are commended for it. Or do you think that it is nothing to be commended by Christ? Those that he commends now, he will commend before the Father, and all the angels, and saints another day; his commendation shall never make you proud, as the applause of

man may do. Oh, what an excellent thing then is it, to make discovery of these false apostles, and false teachers: why should we not all, more or less, according to our places, labour to be found in this work, in these days of ours?

How shall we find out, and discover them? for if we may not go to their meetings, and they be such a crafty, deceiving people, what shall we do, and how shall we try, a true teacher, from a false teacher; or a true apostle, from a false apostle?*

All teachers are to be tried three ways. By

Their call.

Their doctrine.

Their fruits or lives.

As for a man's call to preach: whoever is called to preach, is either called *ad opus*, to a particular work: or he is called *ad munus*, to an office. If he be called to a work only, then his preaching is called prophesy; and so some are called to preach; for else how should we know whether men be fit for office, if they may not preach before they be in office? Now if men be so called to preach, then they must preach according to the proportion and analogy of faith, Rom. xii. 6. If they be so called to preach, they must have a gift to profit others publicly; for all prophesy is for exhortation, edification, and comfort, 1 Cor. xiv. 3. And if they be so called to preach, they must submit that they speak to the judgment of others: the officer speaks with authority; but another speaks with submission, "and let the rest judge," 1 Cor. xiv. 29. So that, if any man will take upon him to preach and teach as a gifted man, if he have not a gift to profit others in public: a gift beyond a family gift; and if he do not speak according to the proportion of faith, and do not submit what he speaketh to the judgment of others, he is a false prophet, and no true teacher in this kind.

But if a man be called to office; then his office is either extraordinary, or ordinary.

If extraordinary, then he is either a prophet, who doth foretell things to come, and they do come to pass; or he is an evangelist, whose office was to accompany, and minister

* Veri doctoris lana est vocatio vel authoritas, sana doctrina; vita probata sed hae lana non omnes eodem modo utuntur imo multi abutuntur.—Ferus in Matt. vii. p. 255.

unto the apostles: when the apostles therefore ceased, then the evangelists ceased; for *sublato subjecto tollitur adjunctum*. Or he is an apostle who hath seen the Lord, and is immediately sent by him, whose commission extendeth unto all the world, who is infallible in regard of doctrine delivered, having the gifts of tongues given him; not by industry, but by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and doth work miracles. And therefore if any man say, that he is an apostle, and yet hath not seen the Lord Christ, nor hath these gifts of tongues, nor can work miracles; then he is a false apostle, and a false teacher in that kind.

But if a man be called to an ordinary office, then, he must be apparently godly: not only free from vice and scandal, but holy and blameless, shining with positive virtues, as well as free from scandalous sins, 1 Tim. iii., Tit. i. He must be qualified, and gifted for the work of preaching, being apt to teach, anointed with the unction of the Holy One; not that he must necessarily have the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost: for when the apostle Paul sets down the due qualifications of a minister, 1 Tim. iii., there is not one word of that. Being gifted and duly qualified, he must be chosen, or desired by the church, Acts xiv. 23. Then having consented, he must be separated to the work of the ministry. And therefore if any man say, that he is a teacher in office, ordinarily called, and yet be profane, scandalous, or vicious, or ignorant, being not fitly qualified; or is not desired, or chosen by the church, and separated to the work of the ministry, he is a false teacher in this kind.

But whether a man's call be ordinary or extraordinary; whether he be called, *ad opus*, to a work, or *ad munus*, to an office, he must make out his call to others; it is not enough to say, I am sent of God, I tell thee I am sent of God: the apostles themselves made out their call to others; "Do ye require a proof of my ministry, or apostleship?" says the apostle Paul; then thus and thus. So that though a man do pretend that he is sent of God, and that he hath seen the Lord; yet if he be not able to give an account thereof unto others, he is surely a false apostle, and a false teacher. Thus may you try and discover men by their call.

As for doctrine. Teachers may, and must be tried by

their doctrine, 1 John iv. 1. Particular doctrines whereby men may be tried, are many: I will name some briefly, because I intend this work no further than to this one exercise. Therefore,

The true apostles never did decry the Scriptures, but under God and Christ, did exalt the Scriptures. They called them the word of God, Rom. ix. 6; 2 Cor. iv. 2. They told us that the Scriptures are a sufficient rule, and able to make us wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 16, 17. That they are the only rule and judge of all doctrines, whereby we are to try the same, according to that of the prophet Isaiah; "To the law, and to the testimony; if any one walk not according to this rule, there is no light in him," chap. viii. That these Scriptures may be expounded, 2 Peter i. 20. The apostles never did deny the original, saying, I deny the Hebrew, or I deny the Greek; but often cited the original Hebrew; yea, the Septuagintal Greek. This was the true apostle's doctrine in regard of the scripture.

As for Christ: The true apostles never did deny the Deity of Christ, whilst he lived here on earth; nor the humanity of Christ in heaven. But for his Deity, the apostle tells us, that he is very God, and the only wise God, 1 John v. 20.

And for the body of Christ: The true apostles tell us, that he did not only rise from the dead, but his body ascended, and that he is man still, 2 Tim. ii. 5, "There is one Mediator, the man Jesus Christ."

As for the ordinances: The apostles never did deny the ordinances; but have told us that the ministration of the gospel, is more glorious than that of Moses, because this was to continue, 2 Cor. iii.; they did not destroy, but erect these ordinances, by commission from Christ, "As I have ordained in all the churches," saith Paul. And more particularly, they did not deny the ministry, not the being of a settled ministry, Rom. xii. 7, though by the hand of man: Titus i., "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain elders in every city:" nor the maintenance, the settled maintenance of ministers, 1 Cor. xi. 14, "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that those that preach the gospel, should live on the gospel." As they did not deny the ministry, so they did not deny water baptism: but they rather called for water baptism, because Cornelius had received the Spirit, Acts x. 47. They did not lay a necessity

upon the disciples, to be plunged into the river or water; for the jailor and Cornelius were baptized in their houses: nor did they ever forbid infant baptism, but tell us that children of believers are holy, 2 Cor. vii. As the true apostles did not deny water baptism, so they did not cry down the Lord's supper, but tell us plainly, that thereby we hold forth the Lord's death till he come. As they did contend for the supper, so they commanded singing: 1. That the whole church should sing; for the whole church of Ephesus, and the whole church of Colosse, are commanded to sing, Eph. v. 18; Col. iii. 16. 2. That the whole church should sing the Psalms of David; for by those titles, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the Psalms of David are distinguished. 3. That this singing should be performed with an audible voice, and not in the heart only; for saith the apostle in the same scriptures, "Speaking and singing with grace in your hearts." 4. That these psalms, or hymns, or spiritual songs, should be sung by many together; not by one alone, but by the whole church; for the evangelist tells us, that Christ, and his disciples, sung a hymn, and so went out after supper: if only one sang, and the rest consented, then that one was Christ, or some one of his disciples; Christ it was not, for if he had sung a hymn, it would have been said, that he sung, and the hymn would have been set down; as it is said, he prayed, and his prayer recorded, John xvii. Nor was it one of the disciples, for as yet the Holy Ghost was not fallen upon them, to gift them with spiritual gifts; neither can it be said, that the word υμνησαντες, should be translated, *Praised;* and when they had praised, &c. For when it is to be so translated, then it is joined with an accusative case, as Heb. ii. 12, but they all sang, audibly, and together. Thus the true apostles of Christ, were for, and not against the ordinances of Christ.*

As for the doctrine of justification: The true apostles preached for justification by imputed righteousness, and by faith, in opposition to works, Rom. iv.

They never preached, or told us that there is a light in

* Affirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ vel erroris quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem.—Plin. Epist. ad Trajan.

Vel communi voce dicere. Magdeburgens. Hist. Cent. ii. cap. 6.

every man, which followed, will bring to salvation: indeed the evangelist saith, That Christ, as God, enlighteneth every one that comes into the world; the wicked with the light of reason and understanding; the godly with the light of grace: and the apostle saith, that the grace of God hath appeared to all men, that is, both Jews and gentiles; but doth not say, that the grace of God hath appeared to all particular men: but he saith, The whole world lies in wickedness; and a natural man doth not perceive the things of God, neither can he.

They never preached, that any man might be perfect, so as to be without sin in this life, but the contrary; saying, "If any man say, he hath no sin, he deceives himself, and there is no truth in him," 1 John i. 8; he doth not say, and there is no humility in him, though it be pride to say so; but there is no truth in him.* And again, the apostle James, "In many things we offend all," chap. iii. 2. And again, "We see and know but in part," 1 Cor. xiii. 9, they acknowledge indeed a perfection of uprightness: but the true apostles never placed any perfection in monastical virginity, or abstaining from meats, cuffs, points, and laces.† But says the apostle, Col. ii. 18, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and in being subject to ordinances: as touch not, taste not, handle not: which all perish in the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things indeed have a shew of wisdom, in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body," ver. 19—23.

The true apostles never preached against respect unto magistrates, parents, and masters. Indeed our Saviour Christ says, "Call no man your father; neither be ye called masters:" but *master*, he tells us at verse 8, is all one with *rabbi*: now these rabbins were their sect-masters, who were the masters of their faith; and such a father and master, no man ought to be: but otherwise the apostle saith, "Children obey your parents; honour thy father: and ser-

* Poterat enim apostolus dicere, si dixerimus, quod non habemus peccatum nos ipsos extollimus, et humilitas in nobis non est, sed cum ait nos ipsos decipimus et veritas in nobis non est satis ostendit eum qui sic dixerit non verum loqui sed falsum.—Concil. Milevit. Can. 6.

† Nunc bene vivitur si sine crimine sine peccato autem si quis vivere se existimet non id agit, ut peccatum non habebat, sed ut veniam non accipiat.—Austin.

vants, be subject to your masters." And did not Paul the apostle call himself, a wise master-builder? Acts xxvi. 25, Paul calleth Festus, most noble Festus; and Agrippa, King Agrippa. And chap. xxvii., he saith to them that were in the ship with him, "Sirs, I perceive that voyage will be dangerous:" and again, verse 21, "He stood forth in the midst, and said, Sirs:" and yet again, verse 25, "Wherefore, Sirs;" or excellent men, be of good comfort, &c.

The true apostles never preached against the resurrection and ascension of the body, but make the doctrine of the resurrection a fundamental article of our faith, 1 Cor. xv., yea, they tell us, that Christ did not only rise, but ascend with his body; and that our bodies shall remain bodies in heaven, as Christ's doth, Phil. iii. 20, "Who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like to his glorious body."

The apostles never preached that there is no place of heaven and hell after death: but as they received of Christ, so they delivered truth unto us. Now Christ saith expressly; "Go ye cursed into everlasting torment, prepared for the devil, and his angels: and Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom of the Father, prepared for you before the foundation of the world."

These were the doctrines of the apostles, and the true teachers of the gospel. Doth any man therefore say, I now come unto you from God, and God hath sent me? And doth he say, there is no other heaven, nor hell, than what is in this life? Or doth he preach against the resurrection and ascension of our bodies? Or doth he preach against respect unto magistrates, and civil relations? Or doth he tell you of a light within all men, which is able to bring them to salvation? Doth he preach perfection, saying, that man may be perfect, and without sin in this life? Or doth he tell you of justification by somewhat within you? Or doth he cry down, degrade, and vilify the ordinances of Christ, ministry, water baptism, Lord's supper, and singing? Or doth he deny the Deity of Christ on earth; or the humanity of Christ in heaven? Or doth he preach down the Scripture by telling you, that the light and spirit within you is your rule? Surely this person is a false apostle, and a false teacher. Thus you may try a man by his doctrine.

A teacher also may and must be tried by his life and fruits;

for saith our Saviour, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: ye shall know them by their fruits," Matt. vii. 15, 16. As ye know a tree, not by the leaves, but by the fruit; so, saith he, ye shall know these men, not by their first profession, but by their after works and ways and fruits.

But if they go in sheep's clothing, how shall I know they are wolves?

Yes; for though their clothing be the sheep's, yet they have the nature and disposition of wolves, the voice, howling and barking of wolves, and the practice of wolves.

The nature of a wolf, though he be in sheep's clothing, is fierce and cruel. So is the nature, spirit and disposition of the false teacher: 2 Tim. iii. 3, "Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good: of this sort are they (ver. 6) which creep into houses, and lead silly women captive," &c.

The voice of the wolf doth betray him; he howls as the sheep do not, and barks at the shepherds. So do false teachers do, they resist the truth, as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, and are continually barking at and speaking evil of the true ministers of the gospel, and shepherds of the sheep. It is recorded of Philip of Macedon, when he laid siege to Athens, that he sent word into the city, that if they would send out ten of their orators, he would be at peace with them. Whereupon Demosthenes rose up in the senate, and said, If the wolves come to the fold, and tell the sheep, that they will be at peace with them, if they will send away all their dogs and shepherds, will the sheep do it? No, the great design of the wolf is to part the sheep from the shepherd. Those therefore that come in sheep's clothing, and cry out against the true ministry of Christ, are no true sheep, but wolves.

The wolf, though he be in sheep's clothings, doth tear and rend the sheep; he cometh not in by the door; and when he is come in, then he doth devour the poor sheep. And so it is with false teachers, they come not in by the door of a lawful call, and they bite and devour and destroy the faith of some.*

* Οἱ ἐρχονται πρὸς ὑμας, Matt. vii. 13, qui venient ex seipsis legitime non missi, de quibus Jer. xxiii. 21, currebant et non mittebam.—Luc. Brugens. in Matt. vii. 15.

But our Saviour saith, that we may know them by their fruits; what are those fruits, and how shall we know them thereby?

If you find that they are given to uncleanness, then they are not sent of God. So are false teachers many times, 2 Pet. ii. 1, "There shall be false teachers amongst you." "These do walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness," ver. 10. See the Epistle of Jude. God doth often give men up to fleshly sins for their vile errors.*

If you find that they are given to lying, then you may know that they are not of God. Truth doth not need our lies to maintain it with; but the doctrine of lies is often maintained with the practice of lying. "And hast found them liars," saith our text here.

If you find that the height of their religion is to maintain some opinion, and that doth consist in some voluntary humility, and keeping under the body, then are they not of God. Col. ii. 18—26.

If you find that their doctrine tends to draw men away from the ordinances of God, then though they pretend to be prophets, yet they are but false prophets. Deut. xiii. 1, "If there arise among you a prophet, and he giveth a sign, and it come to pass, thou shalt not hearken to him," ver. 3. "And he shall be put to death," ver. 5. Why? "Because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God."

If you find that in truth he falls short of him whom he would seem to be, and yet in shew goes beyond him, then he is a deceiver. As for example: If a man say that he is an apostle, but pretends to do more than ever any apostle did, as to judge infallibly in all things; whereas the apostle saith sometime, "This say I, not the Lord;" yet in truth falls short of what an apostle did, who spake with tongues, and

* Pseudo-prophetæ quo modo probari possint: cettissima autem demonstratio hæc est, si deliquerit et contemnat voluptates corporales, imprimis vero sensum illum qui nobis est opprobrio et dedecori et si abominentur omnem libidinem et scortationem; an ignoras enim, qua ratione Zedekias filius Maasijæ et Achab filius Kolijæ de propetia gloriati fuerint, multos homines ad se pertraxerint, verbaque prophetiæ ab aliis instinctus divini afflatu prolata sub suo titulo ventitarint, et tamen in voluptatibus suis venereis perrexerint, ita ut sociorum et discipulorum suorum uxores stupraverint. Donec a Deo retecti et a rege Babyloniæ, meritissima pœna igne combusti fuerint. Jer. xxix. 22, 23.—Rab. Mos. Maiemon. More Nevochim, part 2, cap. 40.

did work miracles; surely this man is a false apostle. It is the way of an hypocrite to imitate the godly, and in outward things he will go beyond many a godly man, yet doth fall short of the weakest saint. Now though every hypocrite is not an heretic, yet every heretic is an hypocrite.

If you find that his great work and business is, to destroy the churches of Christ, then he is not of God, but by this fruit you may know him to be a false teacher. The apostles went up and down confirming the churches, not destroying them. But now, says Luther,* after we have taken much pains, even for ten years together, to gather and settle a church; then comes some fanatic person, and he destroys more in one moment, than we could build in ten years. But, says the apostle, "Mark those which cause division," much more those that cause destruction, and avoid them.

"If they will not hear us (says the apostle John), they are not of God," 1 John iv. 6. "We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." Doth a man then forsake the assemblies of the saints, as the manner of some is, and teach men so to do? he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; he is a false teacher, and by this fruit you may know him. Yea, and by all these fruits you may know false teachers. You may know them by their call; you may know them by their doctrines; and you may know them by their fruits and their practices. And thus you see how those that are false apostles, or false teachers, may be tried and discovered. And is it a commendable thing in the eyes of Christ, to make discovery of them? Now then, as you desire that you may fall under the commendation of Christ here or hereafter, let it be your work and business in these times to make this discovery. Only know,

That it is the special work of church officers, to try and discover false teachers; for this epistle is directed to the angel of the church of Ephesus.

But though it is their work especially, yet it is a work in-

* Decem annis laboratur antequam ecclesiola recte et pie instituta paratur, et ubi parata est, irrepit aliquis fanaticus et quidem idiota, qui nihil novit quam contumeliose loqui, contra sinceros verbi doctores, is uno momento evertit omnia. —Luther.

cumbent upon all the saints and churches; for though the epistle be directed to the angel of the church, yet the matter thereof doth belong to all; for saith the same epistle, "He that hath an ear, let him hear, what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And if this work do belong unto all the church, what an evil thing is it for those that are members of a church, to be beguiled with false teachers. Shall they be beguiled by them, that should discover them? This is directly contrary to their duty. It is your duty, and it is all your duty, to make this discovery. Therefore, yet more practically,

Go to God for wisdom and the Spirit of discerning; it is Christ alone that doth see men's fruit under all their leaves: beg this discerning Spirit therefore at the hands of Christ.

Take heed that you do not lie in any sin or error, for all sin and error blinds. How shall you see the error of another, if you be blinded with your own sin and error?

In case any thing doth arise, which hath any difficulty in it, consult with others, for ye are not alone; and saith David, "I will inquire in thine holy temple."

Be sure that you keep to the Scripture, and take heed that you do not judge of doctrines by impressions. Let the light within you be your principle, enabling you unto what is good; but let it not be your rule to judge of doctrines, that is the word alone.

Take heed that you have not too great a charity towards, and opinion of, those that are suspected to be false teachers. Ye shall know them by their fruits, saith Christ. And lest you should think that they may be good, I tell you, nay, says Christ, in the next words, for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit: no man gathers grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles: "but evil men and seducers," says the apostle. If seducers, you are to look upon them as evil men, as well as on drunkards, swearers, and profane persons; which because some have not done, they have been deceived, instead of making this discovery.*

And if you would be sure to make up a right judgment in this great discovery, then stay your time, and wait long

* Plerique enim hominum ita impostorum liberalitate fascinantur ut quicquid proponunt monstruosæ doctrinæ tamen pro bonis habeant. Quibus Christus respondet, non modo hujusmodi homines bonos non esse, sed ne esse quidem posse. —Cartwrighti Harm. p. 271.

before you close with any of their opinions; for saith Christ, Ye shall know them by their fruit. Now the fruit of a tree is not presently seen; an ill tree in winter may seem to be as good as the best: stay therefore your time, and you shall know them by their fruit, and so be able to make this discovery, which is so pleasing to, and commendable in the eyes of Jesus Christ.*

It may be some will think and say, This doth not concern or reach my condition; I am troubled with and labour under such or such a temptation; and in all this, nothing hath been spoken unto that temptation. But remember, that our Lord and Saviour Christ hath not said to some, but to all, "Beware of false prophets;" not behold, but beware: we behold what is open, and beware of what is hidden.† And both Christ and his apostles tell us, "That in the last days there shall arise false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, and false brethren; insomuch, as if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect:" and is this nothing then unto your condition? It may be it is your temptation, that you do not take heed and beware enough. I dare boldly say, he is under a temptation, that thinks these things do not reach him, or concern his condition. And what is the reason that many poor souls are so misled in these days of ours, but because they have not been prepared, and underlaid with knowledge for to make resistance. All their work and business hath been about some particular temptation, striving against some temptation: if they have heard any thing about that, well; if not, then they think the matter concerns not them; and so not being grounded in the faith, when deceivers come, they are taken captive by them. But I know you all desire to be commended by Christ at that great day, when he shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And this discovery of false teachers, is a matter of great commendation in his eyes now; and what he commends now, he will commend then: wherefore up and be doing. It may

* Si quis ex foliis et floribus judicium formare velit, non expectata fructuum maturitate plane hallucinetur, sic etiam qui de initiis quibusdam judicium sibi singant, &c. tandem enim eorum amentia omnibus innotescet. 2 Tim. iii.—Cartwrighti Harm. p. 270.

† Attendite a falsis prophetis, diligenter cavete non dixit aspicite, sed attendite, quod aspicere est ad allud quod palam videtur, attendere autem est cum sollicitudine inquirere.—Abulens. in Matt. vii. p. 218.

be this may be some pains and labour to you; but Christ saith, "I know thy works and thy labour." It may be it may cost you much trouble and sorrow; but he saith also, "I know thy labour and thy patience." It may be some may think you are too busy and severe in the work of this discovery; but he hath said, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and that thou canst not bear them which are evil, and hast tried them which say, they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." Wherefore let us comfort and encourage one another with these words.

SERMON XII.

THE GOOD AND MEANS OF ESTABLISHMENT.

PREACHED AT STEPNEY, JANUARY 6, 1655.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."—1 PETER v. 10.

SOME think these words are spoken in the way of a promise from God;* others think they are spoken in the way of a desire and prayer to God.† They are a promise, say some, because they are brought in to comfort and relieve these dispersed saints against the temptations of Satan and opposition of the world, which the apostle had mentioned in the former verses (8 and 9), as also because those words, "perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you," are found in some books in the future tense of the indicative mood, to be read thus: "Shall perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle you;"‡ but I find the copies ordinarily to give them in the optative. Beza tells us that all our books, excepting three, do read these words in the optative mood.‖ And Estius,§ though the vulgar latin renders them in the future tense of the indicative, saith that all such copies are of less credit, and that although the words should be in the future tense, it comes all to the same reckoning; forasmuch as the Hebrews, whom the New Testament follows much, do ordinarily put futures for optatives as well as for preceptives. So Num. xx. 17, we translate the words thus: "Let us, I pray thee, pass through thy country;" and

* Promissionem adjungit apostolus.—Salmeron, Grotius, Gerardus, Tirinus, Thom. Aquinus.

† Ad precationem se convertit apostolus.—Calvin, Beza, Piscator, H. Illiricus, Estius, Gomarus. Aretius.

‡ Καταρτισει, στηριξει, σθενωσει, θεμελιωσει.

‖ Omnes nostri codices, tribus tamen exceptis, scripta hæc habent optandi modo.—Beza in loc.

§ In nonnullis quidem exemplaribus græcis verba sunt indicativa modi temporisque futuri, quem admodum in latinis, verum ea minus probatæ sunt fidei.—Estius in loc.

yet the word in the Hebrew is in the future tense: "We will pass through," &c.* So Jer. xl. 15, we read, "Let me go, I pray thee, and I will smite Ishmael;" and yet the word in the Hebrew is, "I will go and smite Ishmael."† So that according to the Hebrew, the future is ordinarily put for the optative in a way of desire and petition. But the words here used are in the optative mood,‡ and therefore, by that argument, we cannot conclude these words to be spoken in the way of a promise. It is true, indeed, that they contain matter of much comfort and relief for those that suffer under the temptations of Satan or oppositions of the world, but so they do, also, though they be spoken in a way of prayer; and it is usual with the apostles to conclude their epistles with a short prayer, and that prayer with a doxology; and so doth the apostle here: "The God of all grace, who hath called you, &c., perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle you; to whom be glory for ever and ever:" a promise is not so concluded, but a prayer is.‖ I conceive, therefore, that these words are spoken in way of a prayer; wherein we have,

First, The mercy, and the blessing prayed for.

Secondly, the arguments ensuring it.

First, As for the mercy and blessing prayed for; it is expressed in four words: perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle you. Some think they are synonimous, all intending the same thing, the confirmation and perseverance of those dispersed christian Jews.§ But though they may aim at the same general thing, yet there are several particulars under that general which the words seem to point at. The first word, which we render *perfect*, should, I think, be translated otherwise. It is the same word that is used Matt. iv. 21, and Mark i. 19, for mending of their nets; and the same that is used, Gal. vi. 1, "You that are spiritual *restore* such an one with the spirit of meekness;" and it signifies such a restoring

* בעכרה. Παρολευσομεθα δια της γης.—Septuagint.

† לאכה. Πορευσομαι δε.—Septuagint. Ibo nunc.—Montanus.

‡ Καταρτισαι, στηριξαι, σθενωσαι, θεμελιωσαι.

‖ Postquam satis incubuit in monitiones nunc se ad precationem convertit, nam frustra in nerem fundetur doctrina nisi Deus per Spiritum suum operetur.—Calvin in loc.

§ Quod pluribus verbis rem unam designat Petrus, nempe fidelium confirmationem, hoc ideo facit ut sciamus raræ esse difficultatis cursum nostrum persequi et proinde singulari Dei gratia opus esse.—Calvin in loc.

as is of unjointed members.* Now these christians being scattered, the apostle prays that God would please to joint them again. Thus the God of all grace, after you have suffered, and been shattered, bring you into order, restore and repair you. But suppose that God restore and mend us, yet we may fall again. True, but I do not only pray for you, saith Peter, that ye may be restored and mended, but that ye may be confirmed, so as ye may not fall away: "The God of all grace stablish you also." The word signifies to fasten, and confirm, and establish;† so Rom. i. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2. But though we be so confirmed by the grace of God that we cannot fall away, yet we may be weak and labour under great infirmity. True, but "I have prayed for you, that you may be strengthened also."‡ But though we be strong and confirmed, so as we shall never fall quite away from grace, yet we may be unsettled. True, but I have not only prayed against your apostacy, but against your unsettlement: "The God of all grace restore, stablish, strengthen and settle you," even as the foundation of the house is settled.‖ So that he doth not only pray for these saints that they may be restored and put into joint, in opposition to their scattering, but for confirmation in opposition to apostacy, and for settlement in opposition to all unsteadfastness, and for strength of grace in opposition unto weakness, the cause and ground of all unsettledness. Now these graces he doth assure them of by divers arguments. Some drawn from the nature of God, he is the God of all grace; not of grace only, as the Syriac reads the words, omitting the word *all*, but he is the God of all grace: and therefore though you have need of much grace, yet you need not be discouraged, for the God whom you deal with is a God of all grace; and under this title have I prayed unto him for you. It is good closing with God in prayer by that title and attribute which is most suitable to our condition. Other arguments are drawn from the precedent work of God

* Significat ergo apostolus relam bonorum operum quam teximus facile ac cito in hac vita rumpi nisi accedat Dei καταρτισμος.—Gerard.

Significat enim καταρτιζειν, membra in corpore luxata reponere.—Ibid.

Beza compingat Erasm. instauret.

† Στηριξειν significat figere, firmitur statuere, Septuag. utuntur pro יצר stare fecit: quod alibi exponunt pro στηρεω, alibi pro στηλοω, alibi pro βεβαιοω.

‡ Θεινουν, significat roborare σθενω valeo, opponitur ασθενεια.

‖ Θεμελειουν, fundare

upon them: "Who hath called you unto his eternal glory," Now the gifts and calling of God are without repentance: "Whom he hath called, them he hath also glorified." And therefore seeing he hath called you, you may be assured that he will confirm, strengthen and settle you. God's calling grace doth assure us of his confirming grace; "He that hath called you unto eternal glory, even he (αὐτος, is emphatical, and omitted in the English to be read, thus, The God of all grace, who hath called you, &c.), he himself establish you," &c.* But our sufferings do still abound, for we are a dispersed people. Be it so, yet your sufferings are but a modicum, a little, ολιγον, both in regard of measure and time: and after you have thus suffered a little, and a little while, the God of all grace will restore, stablish, strengthen and settle you. This have I prayed for you. So that the doctrine from the verse is this:

It is a great blessing of God, and worthy of all our prayer, to be established and settled in the truth and good ways of God. Settling grace and mercy, in opposition both to outward and inward trouble, is a great mercy, and well worth praying for.

It is a great mercy and blessing to be outwardly settled. The apostle speaks here in reference to that opposition and hatred which they met with from the world, in scattering them as a people and as a church; for saith he, verse 9, "Be stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world:" as also in reference to those temptations of Satan which they laboured under; for saith he, verse 5, "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." So that I say,

First, It is a great mercy for a nation and state to be settled.

Secondly, A mercy and great blessing for a church to be settled.

Thirdly, A great blessing and mercy for a particular soul to be settled in the good ways of God.

It is a great mercy and blessing, for a nation or kingdom

* Emphaticum quoque illud quod in Græco textu hæc verba Ο δε Θεος πασης χαριτος, conjunguntur cum sequentibus αυτος καταρτισαι: ostendit enim apostolus ex eodem gratiæ fonte et primam ad gloriam cœlestem vocationem et ultimam hujus beneficii consummationem provenire.—Gerard.

to be in a settled state and condition, outwardly: for it is the mercy promised; and promised mercies are no small mercies. Now the Lord promiseth to his people, when he deals with them in a way of mercy, to settle and establish them, Jer. xxiv. 6, "For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land, and I will build them, and not pull them down, and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. So chap. xxxii. 37, "And I will cause them to dwell safely;" yea, vease 41, "I will rejoice over them, to do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." This also was that mercy which the Lord promised to David, 2 Sam. vii. 16, "But thine house, and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, and thy throne shall be established for ever." And if ye look into 2 Chron. ix. 8, ye shall find, that this establishing of a nation or kingdom, is both a sign, and a fruit of God's love; "Blessed be the Lord thy God," said the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, "which delighteth in thee, to set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God; because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them," &c. On the other side; when God is angry with a people, then he pours a spirit of giddiness and perverseness on them, that they run to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are as the leaf shaken with every wind, 1 Kings xiv. 15, the Lord threatens Israel "to smite them, as a reed is shaken in the water, because they had made them groves, provoking the Lord to anger." A great judgment then it is, to be shaken like a reed in the water. This also is a fruit of God's anger; and when a people are in this posture, it argues that God hath smitten them in his anger. But when may a people be said to be thus smitten, as a reed shaken in the water? Even then, when they are driven to and fro with every wind, when they are easily moved, and put by their station, so that any one that rises up against them, may afflict them, and lay them low. And if this unsettled, shaking condition, be a great judgment upon a nation or people; then surely the contrary is a great mercy, it is a great blessing indeed for any kingdom or nation to be in a settled estate and condition.*

* Sicut solet moveri arundo in aqua scilicet quia arundines faciliter moventur

Secondly, As it is a mercy and blessing for a nation to be settled and established, so for the church of God: for when the church hath this rest, then it is edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, Acts ix. 31.

Establishment is the mercy promised to the church also, Isa. ii. 2, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains:" what is more settled on earth than a mountain? The house of the Lord shall be as a mountain upon the mountains in the last days; great shall be the glory of the latter days. As the sins and apostacies of the latter days, shall be the greatest sins and apostacies; so the glory of the churches, shall be the greatest in the last days: and the establishment of the churches, is not only promised, but promised as part of the glory of the latter times.

It is that mercy and blessing which the apostles laboured for continually. First they took a great deal of pains to convert, and bring men home to God; being converted, the apostles then formed them into several churches; and churches being planted, then their great work and business was to establish them, Acts xiv. 21, "And when they had preached the gospel to that city" or had gospelized that city, "and had taught many," or had discipled many, or those that were fit and worthy, "they returned again to Lystra, to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith," &c.*

This they also prayed for; and therefore as the apostle Peter shuts up his Epistle with this prayer for the dispersed christian-Jews: so the apostle Paul doth close up his Epistle to the Corinthians, with the same desire and prayer for them; 2 Cor. xiii., "And this also we wish, even your perfection," verse 9, *την υμων καταρτισιν*. And, Rom. xvi. 25, he concludes thus: "Now to him that is of power to establish you," &c. *υμας στηριξαι* where the apostle Paul useth two of

in aqua quocunque vento impellente, aut levi aquarum decursu, ita Israeli incideret in magnas calamitates et Deus faceret eum tam passibilem ut a quocunque insurgente contra eum posset percuti.—Abulens. in Loc.

* Ευαγγελισαμενοι την πολιν εκεινην και μαθητευσαντες ικανους επιστηριζοντες τας ψυχας των μαθητων παρακαλουντες εμμενειν τη πιστει.

these four words that are used by Peter. The closing wish doth always fall upon some precious mercy.

And as it is the mercy prayed for, so sometimes it is made the signal mercy, whereby the church is declared to be the church of Christ; "Whose house ye are," saith the apostle to the Hebrews, "if you hold fast the confidence of your rejoicing, stedfast to the end." An house is settled, fixed, and established; a tent is removable, but a house is not so: unworthy are those of the name of the house of God, that are unsettled in the truth: "These things write I unto thee, saith Paul to Timothy, "that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." Yea, every member of a church, should be the pillar in the house of God. So the Lord promiseth to the church of Philadelphia. Surely therefore it is matter of great importance for a church and people of God, to be settled and established.

But thirdly and especially: It is a great mercy and blessing for a particular soul to be settled in the truth, and established in the good ways of God. "It is a good thing," saith the apostle, "that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been exercised therein." Possibly a man's heart may be comforted and strengthened with meats, Ps. civ. 15, it is said, "And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." Where the same word is used by the Septuagint, that is here used in the text.* But the apostle Paul doth relate to the ceremonial law: for the Jews converted to Christ, were too superstitiously addicted to the observation of legal ceremonies, especially those which concerned meats,† and difference of meats, Rom. xiv. 2; Col. ii. 16, and to those is this speech opposed; "It is good that the heart be established with grace:" as if he should say, some think to find establishment in the observation of meats, and doctrines for the Jewish ceremonies, but the best establishment, is in the doctrine of the gospel, and the grace of

* Αρτος καρδιαν ανθροπως ηριτει.—Septuagint.

† Judæi ad Christum conversi superstitiosius inhærebant observationi legalium ceremonialum cum primis discrimini ciborum a Moyse prescripto illis hæc sententia est opposita.—Gerrard in loc.

God revealed in the gospel. Some think that by grace here, we are to understand *holiness*, and those spiritual gifts whereby men are sanctified. But having said in the former words, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines:" these words seem to comply and correspond better with them, if by grace we understand the doctrine of the New Testament; from which the Galatians are said to fall, "Ye are fallen from grace," when they returned to the law: but in both respects, it is a good or beautiful thing, that the heart be established with grace.* For,

It is the ground of all our fruitfulness: ye know how it is with a tree or plant, though in itself it be never so good, yet if it be not settled in the earth, it bringeth forth no fruit: if the plant be good, and the soil good, it may bring forth good fruit; but if you be always removing it from one place to another, it cannot bring forth fruit. And what is the reason that many are so unfruitful in their lives, but because they are so unsettled in their hearts and judgments? The tree that is planted by the water's side, brings forth fruit in its season, Ps. i. But as for the ungodly, it is not so with them, "They are as the chaff," that brings forth no fruit, whom "the wind drives to and fro." And the truth is, an unsettled man, is neither fit to receive good, nor to do good. So long as the vessel is moved up and down, ye cannot pour the liquor into it; and who can write exactly when his arm is jogged? Can any man walk exactly in a crowd, which one while carrieth him this way, and another while that way? No surely: neither can an unsettled, unestablished heart walk exactly with the Lord his God.

It is the bottom of all our praises: The birds do not ordinarily sing till they be set; they do not usually sing flying; but when they are fixed, then they begin to sing: so saith David, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed;" and what then? then saith he, "I will sing and give praise;" but not till then: and what is the reason that many pass so many years of their lives in doubtings and fears, never prais-

* Quidam in genere intelligunt interna et spiritualia Dei dona quibus homines sanctificantur; quidam doctrinam Christianam fide susceptam. Oratiam Christianismi, ut sit sensus firmitatem et stabilimentum cordis quærendum esse in gratia Dei quam N. T. mediator Christus attulit, non in observatione ciborum quam Moses tradidit. Ibid.

ing God for any love, or mercy to them? but because they are unsettled in their spiritual estate and condition.

It is the beginning of our perseverance: then I begin to persevere, when I begin to settle, and to be established; as instability is the beginning of apostacy, so settledness is the beginning of perseverance.

It is that good thing which pleaseth God exceedingly: God was so pleased with Jehoshaphat upon that account, that he passed by, and winked at all his infirmities, even because his heart was fixed and established, 2 Chron. xix. 2, the prophet reproves him for joining with the ungodly; "Nevertheless," saith he, "there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart:" so ye read it: but I think rather, "And hast fixed, established, or set thine heart to seek God." On the contrary, it is said of Rehoboam, though he did many good things, that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord, because he prepared not;" or, because he fixed not, established not, set not his heart to seek God, 2 Chron. xii. 14, it is the same word which we translate, *establish*, in other scriptures,* as Ps. xl. 2, "He hath set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings;" and it notes, such a fixation and settlement, whereby a man doth so continue in his way and course that he will not be put out of it. This Rehoboam wanted; for he was רדלב, a soft hearted man naturally: and though he did many things that were right and good, yet he was led by the counsel of his young men, and his heart was not set and fixed to seek the Lord: but Jehoshaphat was of a stedfast spirit, and would not be put out of his way, and therefore though he did some things amiss, yet the Lord commends him, and accepts of him: so that, although a man do many good things; yet if his heart be not fixed, and established, the Lord will pass by, and not regard the same: but though a man do commit great evils, yet if his heart be set to seek the Lord, God will pardon and pass by all his failings. Oh, what a blessed frame of heart, is this fixed spirit. Surely it is that grace wherein God is much delighted: an unsettled soul God cares not for,

* רוך in Niphal בכוך Paratus, sirmus stabilis qui nec everti nec impediri qacat in Pirl. et Hiphil. paravit preparavit firmavit canfirmavit, stabilivit, includit firmitatem et certitudinem.—Shindlerg.

nor for any work or service that is done by him. We read of hundreds and thousands of vessels of gold, silver, and brass that were in the temple, but not of one crystal glass or vessel; why so, saith one, but because that is of a brittle, fragile, and uncertain nature? which, as it hath no colour of its own, so it is apt to receive the colour of any liquor.* So is an unsettled man, and unconstant, whom God cares not for in his temple and service. Who cares for the service of a fool; or regards the prayers, desires, and petitions of a fool? If a fool knock earnestly at your door, you say to your servant, Go not to the door, it is the fool that knocketh; and if a fool come and speak to you, you regard not what he saith. Now an unconstant, unsettled soul, is a foolish soul. It is the property of a fool to be always beginning; he begins a good work, and then he leaves it off; then he begins another, and he leaves off that; *Stultus semper incipit vivere*, the fool doth always begin to live: and the same word in the Hebrew, and Scipture phrase, that signifies an inconstant man, signifies a fool:† and if ye look into Eccles. v., ye shall find, that the sacrifice of fools, is called so upon account of unconstancy and unsettledness; for, says Solomon, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed," verse 4.‡ And therefore, if an unsettled man pray and knock at God's door, he will say, Let him alone, regard him not, it is that unsettled fool, that unconstant fool, who is off and on, to and fro in my service. God hath no pleasure in fools, and an unsettled, unestablished soul, is a fool in Scripture language; surely therefore he is so in the eyes of God. But if a man be fixed and established, the Lord delighteth in him, and in all those works and services that are done by him. Establishing grace is a great mercy.

* Cur quæso in tanta multitudine vasorum, ne unum quidem vitreum reperitur? dices quod cum facile frangatur est symbolum inconstantiæ, quam Deus, vult a suo templo exulare. Ita est, sed ulterius addo, quod vitrum quam expers est coloris proprii, tam facile refert alienos, quibuscunque enim liquoribus imbuitur statim concolor efficitur, sub hoc igitur typo voluit Deus a suo obsequio arcere eos omnes qui non servant unam vivendi rationem, sed in diversa stadia feruntur, et nunc hos nunc illos mores imitantur.—Mendoza in Reg. i. cap. i. p. 300.

† כמיל stultur, insipiens, varius, mobilis, levis, inconstans.

‡ כיאור חפץ בכמילום.

And it is also the character of a good and gracious person, whereby he is distinguished from the ungodly of the world.* A good man lives and dwelleth at the sign of a settled conversation; he is planted by the rivers of water, Ps. i., the wicked are as the chaff that are driven to and fro, not settled, not planted. It is true indeed, that a moral, civil man, may be naturally of a fixed spirit, serious, staid, and settled in his moralities; but though he be settled in what is morally good, yet he is also settled upon his lees, in what is spiritually evil; settled in prejudice against the saints, and against the power of godliness; settled in his neglect of the sabbath, &c., and though he be of a fixed spirit and temper naturally, yet that fixation doth not arise to any high or great matter. It is an easy thing to cast up the account truly, where the sum is small: morality is a small sum.† When did you hear of a boat cast away in the river, the narrow waters? It is the ship that puts to sea, that doth make the shipwreck: small boats seldom miscarry in the narrow waters. Now the civil, moral man, doth trade in the narrow waters, and he boasts that he doth not miscarry: some make shipwreck of faith, and a good conscience, but as for me, saith he, I walk constantly, evenly, and these many years have made no shipwreck of my profession, as others have done: but, I pray, what is the reason? He never put to sea, he never yet did launch forth into the great ocean of the gospel; he trades in the narrow waters of his own righteousness, and therein he is exact and constant. But now, take a godly, gracious man, and he doth abound in the work of the Lord, and yet he is established in it; according to that of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; Why? Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Surely therefore it is a great mercy and blessing, to be settled in the truth, and established in the good ways of God; a mercy for a nation, a mercy for

* Ut venti in autumno arbores non tollunt, sed folia secum in auras forunt sic tristia, leves tamen mentes movent fortes et in pietate firmas non evertunt. Origen. Homil. xiii. in Numb.

Maximum malæ mentis indicium fluctuatio.—Sen.

† Virtus est circa difficile bonum, sed in parvis operibus constantem esse non est difficile.—Aquin.

a church, a mercy for a particular person to be thus established: and therefore,

Secondly, It is worthy of all our prayers; which is the second part of the doctrine: for saith the doctrine, It is a great blessing, and worthy of all our prayers, to be settled, and established in the good ways of God.

It is that mercy, grace, and blessing, which we all need. "Man in his best estate," or according to the Hebrew expression, Man in his most consistent, and settled estate, "is altogether vanity." Man at the best is a poor, wavering, and unsettled creature: yea, saith the scripture, God saw no stability in his angels; and therefore if we do naturally labour under such instability, we have all need to pray, and to pray much for this grace of establishment.

It is God only who doth give out this grace, it belongs unto him alone to establish nations, churches, and persons. He is able to establish those who do come to him for it: "Now to him that is of power to establish you," &c. Rom. xvi. 25. He is willing to do it: "But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you, and keep you from evil," 2 Thess. iii. 3. He is engaged to do it, for he hath promised to do it, as hath been proved already, and it is his prerogative: "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God," 2 Cor. i. 21. As for a land or nation, it is the Lord alone that doth settle it: "He looseth the girdles of princes, and maketh them to wander or stagger like a drunken man," Job xii. 25. Again, "He girdeth their loins with a girdle," ver. 18. He speaketh the word, and it standeth fast; who said to Solomon, and so to all the princes of the earth, "If thou wilt walk before me in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes, and my judgments, then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever," 1 Kings ix. 4, 5. As for a church, it is he alone who doth settle and establish it: "And of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her, and the Highest himself shall establish her," Psalm lxxxvii. 5. And as for a particular person, it is God alone that doth settle him, both in his outward and spiritual condition. In his outward condition, "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud, but he will establish the border of the widow," Prov. xv. 25;

and in his spiritual estate and condition, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, comfort your hearts (saith the apostle), and establish you in every good word and work," 2 Thess. ii. 17. And the psalmist doth address himself unto God for this, saying, "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it," Psalm xc. 17. And if it be so great a blessing to be thus settled and established, if we have so great need of establishing grace, and it belongs unto God alone to work it; then surely it is not only a matter worthy of our prayer, but our duty also, to say and pray with the psalmist, "Stablish thou, O Lord, the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it." And thus you have the doctrine cleared in the parts thereof.

If it be so great a mercy and blessing, to be settled, fixed, and established in the truth, and good ways of God; then what cause have all those that are now established, to praise the Lord, and say, I was a poor, unsettled person, but through grace I am now settled. The more unsettled the times are, and men in the times, the greater is the mercy to be truly fixed and established. Hath the Lord, therefore, settled your heart in these unsettled times? Oh, then give thanks unto the Lord, and say, "My heart is fixed; O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise."

Oh, but I cannot find this fixation of spirit in my soul, nor that stedfastness in my life, as I desire, and therefore I cannot praise the Lord as I should.

It may be so. Yet know that there is much difference between variety of grace and instability of spirit. The exercise of various graces, is a great blessing; instability of spirit is a great evil. Ye may exercise one grace which you did not exercise before, and you may perform one gracious work which you did not before; yet this no instability of spirit. You must know also, that there is a kind of shaking which is consistent with this true settledness and establishment of heart. Ye see how it is with the ships in the harbour, and with those ships which lie at anchor, though they be not driven, and tossed up and down with the waves of the sea, yet in the time of a storm, they do move and are shaken. So it may be with thy soul: though thou hast cast anchor within the vail, and art come unto thy harbour, yet thou

mayest be somewhat moved and shaken; but though you be in some measure shaken, yet you are not tossed up and down as those that are not at anchor; and therefore, oh, what cause have you in these unsettled times, for to praise the Lord.

If establishment be so great a blessing, what a sad condition are those in, that are not established, not settled, not fixed, either in their judgments, or lives? Not a mountebank come to town, but they must run to him for some of his salves; not a wandering star appear, but they must go to him for some of his light. These are those unlearned and unstable souls; these are those that are laid out for a prey unto Satan's instruments: as Satan goes up and down, seeking whom he may devour, so do his instruments; and there are a people that through the just judgment of God, shall be a prey unto them: and who are those, but these unlearned and unstable souls? Some again are unsettled in their lives and practises; sometimes they are for God, and sometimes against him; sometimes for his service, and sometimes against it: these are those that are contrary to all men, and to themselves: these are those that are like to Ephraim, whose righteousness is like the morning dew, fading and vanishing: and both these are as the picture or map in the frame, which you may carry from one room to another; hang it in this room, and it suits well with it; carry it into another room, hang it up there, and it suits well with that; and whatever room you hang it in, it can comply therewith: whereas, if it be in no frame, only glued or plastered to the wall, ye cannot remove it without tearing of it. So in this case; take a good, and gracious, fixed soul, and you may sooner tear him than remove him from the truth, or the good ways of Christ: but an unsettled person, is for every room, and for every company; carry him into one company, and he can comply with it; carry him into a second, third, or fourth, he can comply with all; why? but because his heart is unfixed, not established. But woe unto him, for he is upon the road to apostacy; instability is the highway to apostacy. Oh, the sad condition of those that are not established.

What shall we do then, that we may be established? It is a mercy and great blessing for a nation, church, and parti-

cular person to be settled; what shall we do, that in all these respects we may be established?

As for a nation or christian state. It must first settle religion: such a nation can never be settled, till religion be settled; for religion is the main mast, and if that be not strengthened, all the tackling will be loose, Isa. xxxiii. 23, "The tacklings are loosed," saith the prophet; "they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread their sail:" and Deut. xxviii. 9, it is said, "The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto, and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," verse 8, yea, "The Lord shall establish thee, &c., if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways," verse 9. "And all the people of the earth shall be afraid of thee," verse 10. And if ye look into the Books of the Kings, and Chronicles, ye shall observe that in the latter days of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, before their captivity, these kingdoms were unsettled, only upon this account, because religion was not settled; as religion was settled, so the land was settled; and as religion was unsettled, so was the land unsettled. Men think that the settlement of religion is to be an after work: First, say they, let us look to our being, the settlement of the land; and then look to our well-being, the settlement of religion: But if we consult with God in the Scriptures, we shall find that a professing nation, shall never be settled, till religion be settled; and as that wavers, so shall the state waver also. Would you therefore have a land settled? pray for the settlement of religion in the first place.

Then must there be care taken for a succession of godly magistrates: a good magistrate, is a good steersman: but if one steer one way, and his successor steer another way, how can the state be settled? While the children of Israel had a good judge, the people served the Lord; but when Joshua was dead, "And the elders who had seen all the great works of the Lord, they forsook the Lord, and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of their enemies," Judges ii. 7, 11—15. "Then God raised up other judges, and the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their ene-

mies," verse 18. But when that judge was dead, they returned, and corrupted themselves, and so the anger of the Lord was hot against them again, verses 19, 20. Then God raised up Othniel, and he judged Israel, and the Spirit of the Lord came on him, and the Lord delivered their enemies into his hand, chap. iii., and so the land had rest forty years, verse 10, 11. But when Othniel died, the children of Israel did evil again, and so the Lord delivered them into the hands of their enemies, verses 12—14. Then God raised up Ehud, and he judged Israel, and subdued their enemies, verse 30; but when Ehud was dead, the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord again, chap. iv. 1, and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan. Then they cried unto the Lord, and he raised up Deborah and Barak, who destroyed their enemies, praised God, and settled religion, and the land had rest forty years, chap. v. 31. Thus unsettled was the land, whilst there was no succession of godly magistrates. Would you therefore have your land settled? pray for a continuation, and succession of godly magistrates, and that care may be now taken for this thing: thus shall your land and state be established.

Yet this is not enough; but these godly, righteous men, must not only do some righteous things; but govern in righteousness: for the throne is established by righteousness: though righteous men do rule, yet if they oppress the people, and do not govern in righteousness, the nation cannot be settled. Now God hath promised a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein righteousness dwells; not where righteous things shall be done, and where righteousness shall now and then pass through it; but where righteousness shall take up its habitation and dwelling. Pray, and pray much for this; for by this shall your throne be established.

Yet this is not all; but the governors of a nation, must believe and trust in the Lord; not ruling and managing the affairs of the nation by policy only, and moral prudence; but they must trust in the Lord, and live, and act by faith in their government; for saith the Lord to Ahaz, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established," Isa. vii. 9. So that if princes, governors, and rulers, will trust in their own strength, or in their confederacies with other nations,

they and their land cannot be settled: but if in all their dealings with the nations, they rule and act in a way of faith towards God, then shall the land be established. And therefore let them, and all the people, remember the good counsel of that good king Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 20, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

As for a church. All the churches must know, that they are a people which of all others, are laid out for sufferings; unto them especially it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer for Christ; and the serious consideration hereof, will help to establish them: for when the apostles went up and down confirming the disciples, and churches, what doctrine did they preach unto them but this? Acts xiv. 21, "They returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God."

If particular churches would be settled and established, they must have all the officers, and ordinances of Christ then; as a ship under sail, with all its sails out, is beautiful and doth move evenly; so shall they also do. A church is never settled, till it have all those officers in it, which our Lord and Saviour Christ hath appointed. And what is the reason that many are so unsettled at this day, but because they do either despise, or neglect those offices, and officers, which are the fruits of Christ's ascension, and which he hath given for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," Eph. iv. 11—14. What is more uncertain than a weathercock that is carried about with every wind? If you forsake the ministry, and those officers which Christ hath given to his church, this will be your state and condition, saith the apostle here. Now, when pride or covetousness gets into churches, then, though they have some of Christ's officers amongst them, yet they will not be for all: for, say they, we are not able to maintain more than one; and, saith that one, if another be chosen, I must have less, and rule less. Oh, that churches therefore, would take heed of these great sins, pride,

and covetousness; which will always keep them in an unsettled condition.

Let all the churches know, what the word of God's patience is, and observe and keep the same: For saith our Saviour to the church of Philadelphia, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world; and him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out," Rev. iii. 10, 12. He that overcometh, is the same that keepeth the word of Christ's patience: what is that? In all times: there is some truth, which is the trying, suffering truth. In Luther's time, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, was the word of God's patience; in queen Mary's time, that truth which opposed transubstantiation, was the word of God's patience; In Athanasius' time, the doctrine of Christ's Deity was the word of Christ's patience. There is always some truth or other, the profession and owning whereof, saith, here is the patience of the saints, Now if the churches keep that word, and overcome in the keeping of it, the Lord Christ will make every member of them, as a pillar in the temple of God, that shall go no more out.

In case any difficulty or trouble do arise in a church which is beyond their own light and strength, they must call in the help of other churches: for when there was such a knot as the church of Antioch could not untie, they sent to the church and apostles at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 16; who having settled the matter, they sent the result and decrees unto other churches concerned, whereby they had peace and establishment.

But especially, it is the duty of all the churches to pray, and pray much for this great mercy of establishment; for the Lord hath said, Isa. lxii. 6, "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Such a time as this there is a coming; we are commanded to pray, and to pray earnestly for it; and the Lord hath not only promised the mercy, but to give hearts to pray for it: for saith he, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night," where-

fore let us give him no rest: so shall the churches have rest, and be established.

As for particular persons. Wouldst thou be established in the truth, and good ways of God? Then observe what those things are, which do make others unsettled, and take heed thereof. In case a man doth decay, or break in his estate; some great merchant, tradesman, or farmer break, you will diligently look into the causes of it, and say, this man lived at too high a rate, beyond his estate; or he was bound for others, or he kept ill company, or he did not keep his accounts well, and therefore I will take heed of these things. Now will ye observe the causes of an outward break, and will ye not observe what are the reasons that so many are unsettled, break and decay, in the trade of their souls? Surely, either it is because they do want primitive breakings; for the stony ground comes to nothing at the last, though it hath much joy at the first, because it wants depth of earth. The stick that is thrust into the earth, is more easily pulled up than the plant which is rooted in the earth. So are all those who have no root in themselves. Or because they take up great resolutions, without answerable pre-deliberations; whereas we know that the needle must play about the polar point, before it comes to stand and settle; he that would hit the mark, must take his level before he parts with his arrow. And if men resolve before they have fully considered, they will ere long be unresolved again. Or because men do not walk by a settled rule: he can never be settled, that doth not walk by a settled rule: a man's own thoughts and apprehensions are unsettled things; the Hebrew word for *thoughts*,* comes from a root which signifies to move, as the tops of trees, because as the tops of the trees waver, and are in continual motion, so are our thoughts and apprehensions. But the word of the Lord is settled as the heavens, Ps. cxix. "Thy word is for ever settled in heaven." So long as I want the divine counsel of the word, my heart is like a vagrant, that is most unstable, said Bernard; for whilst I am not subject to God, I am contrary to myself. Or because they are divided in their own hearts: a double minded man, is unstable in all his ways, saith the apostle; and when men have a heart, and a heart,

* סעיפים cogitationes quæ in corde sunt sicut ramus in arbore hinc inde diffusus.

לב ולב a heart for the world, yet a good mind to Christ; how is it possible but they should be most unsettled? Or because they are too confident of their own strength and judgment: whereas the only way to be firm and stedfast, is to be sensible of one's own infirmity. We read of a two-fold confidence in Peter; a confidence in Christ, and a confidence in his own strength: when he was confident in Christ, saying, "Master, if it be thou, command that I come unto thee," he did not miscarry; but when he was confident in his own strength, saying; "Lord, though all men forsake thee, yet will not I," then he fell, and fell foully. "Hold thou me up," said the Psalmist, "and I shall be safe, and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually," Ps. cxix. 119. But if men lean unto their own understanding, are confident of their own strength, and think that they are able to deal with all gainsayers, and so will try all things, God leaves them to their own opinions, and they scrabble upon the door, and do change their behaviour. Or because men do forsake the ministry, which Christ hath given to the churches for their edification, perfection, and establishment, Eph. ix. 11—14. Or because they have too fair an opinion of those that are erroneous, thinking that they may be godly, though they be never so unsound in their judgments, whereby they are drawn into society and communion with them, and so fall from their own stedfastness; whereas the apostle tells us of the error of the wicked, 2 Peter iii. 17, and that men may be wicked upon the account of their errors in judgment, James v. 19, 20, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins:" and our Lord and Saviour Christ calling upon us to beware of false prophets, Matt. vii. 15, tells us, that they are corrupt trees, and cannot bring forth good fruit, verse 16, 17, 18. As if he should say, if you would take heed, and beware of them, you must know them, and not think that they are good men; for if you think that they may be good, notwithstanding their errors in doctrine, you will be misled by them, and removed from your stedfastness. Or because that men do not improve their christian communion for the life and power of godliness, but for light only, and discoursing

notions: whereas the apostle Paul writing to Timothy, saith, "Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding oppositions of science, falsely so called; which some professing, have erred concerning the faith," 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21. And what is the reason, that not only some, but many have now erred concerning the faith, and have fallen from their stedfastness, but because they have been thus affected? Or because they have not been built on the rock Christ; but on some sandy, and washy foundation: whereas the Psalmist saith, "He set my feet on a rock, and established my goings," Ps. xl. 2, but if men be upon the sand, they must needs fall, and great will be their fall, as their profession is great. Sometimes men live high, and profess beyond that stock of grace which they have: but if you would be kept and established, observe what the causes, and reasons are, of the instability and apostacy of others, and take heed thereof.

But what shall I do, that I may be more settled in regard of my judgment; and that I may be established in the present truth?

Get a clear and distinct understanding in the things and truths of the gospel: labour, not only to know, but to get a clear, and judicious apprehension, and clearness in the truths of Christ; Ps. cvi., it is said of the Israelites, that when they saw the Egyptians drowned in the sea, "They sang the praises of God, and believed his words," verse 12, "yet they soon forgat his works," verse 13. And why so? but because they had no clear understanding in them, verse 7, "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt." And this apostle Peter, doth join the unlearned and unstable man together, 2 Peter iii. "Which they that are unlearned, and unstable, wrest to their own destruction," verse 16. Some would have it read thus: "Which those that are unteachable, and do refuse." But unlearned suits well enough with the original, αμαθεις:* for what is the reason that men are so unstable, but because they are not grounded, and studied, in the body of divinity? They take up some truth by hear-say, and education; and not being studied in them, they are soon removed from them: study therefore, and get a clear and

* Græcum αμαθεις proprie significat indociles qui nolunt rectius instrui et informari, qui monstratæ ex verbo Dei cœlesti veritati locum dare renunt.—Gerard in loc.

distinct knowledge in the great mysteries and truths of the gospel.

Take heed of unsettling principles; for they will baptize your judgment into a conformity with them; such as the apostacy of saints, and falling from grace. If a man hold that he may be a saint to day, and none to-morrow; a saint the third day again, and none the fourth day; must not he needs be unsettled in judgment? It is commonly known that Bertius wrote a book de Apostasia Sanctorum, of the apostacy of the saints;* and as well known, that being then a protestant, he after fell away unto popery: and when he came to France, and made a renunciation of his former faith, and shewed the reasons of his conversion to the popish faith, he tells us in his printed oration, that *primus conversionis gradus*, the first step to his popish conversion was, the knowledge of, and contending for, that doctrine, that faith, as an act justifies; and that the το *credere*, is imputed to us for our justification in the sight of God. And well might that principle have such an influence upon him, being brought forth by his former unsettling principles. Unsettling principles will make an unsettled judgment; and an unsettled judgment, will bring forth an unsettled life, and practice. Take heed therefore of unsettling principles.

Be sure that you do not make any impression, the rule and square of your judgment; judge not doctrines by impressions; "We have a more sure word of prophesy, whereunto ye shall do well, that you take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place," saith the apostle, 1 Pet. i. 19. Where do ye find in all the scripture, that God hath put heart-impressions into the chair, to be judge of doctrines? If I judge of a doctrine by an impression made upon my soul, the devil

* Cum improbarem illam novatorum sententiam, qua docebant non justificari nos a Deo nisi justitia aliena videremqne illius sententiæ. Authores in dicto illo B. Pauli fides credentis reputatur ipsi in justitiam vocem fidei non proprie accipere sed per catalepsin aut metonymiam ita scil. ut per fidem non ipsa fides sed objectum fidei Christus scil. vel obedientia Christi significaretur; ostendi non tamen id a Scripturis esse alienum sed etiam nervos religionis, hoc est studium bonorum operum ea sententia succidi suscepi ergo adversus. Sibrand. Lubbertum, acerrimum novæ illius arrogantis et prophanæ opinionis patronum grave certamen hic ergo primus suit meæ ad fidem catholicam conversionis gradus.—Petri Bertii Oratio qua rationem reddit cur romano catholicam fidem amplexus sit. page 19.

knows how to fetch me off quickly from the truth: what settlement, or establishment of soul can there be, whilst men will make their light within them, the rule of their judging doctrines? The word of God without, is my rule; the light within, is my help to understand that rule: but if I judge of doctrines by impressions of the word on my heart, I can never be settled; therefore take heed of that.

Get into the house of God: God's house, is an house of establishment; there he commandeth his blessing, and life for evermore; there if one fall, another may help him up; and if one err, another may inform him; there the Lord hath promised to make men pillars for stedfastness: "And he that overcometh, I will make him (saith Christ) a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go no more out," Rev. iii. 12. Ye know how it is with the bee: so long as it is fair, and sun-shining weather, it is abroad in the fields; but if the winds be high, and rough, it doth then keep its hive. Now as Solomon saith, Learn of the pismire; so say I, Learn of the bee. Are the winds high and rough? Keep your hive; and your hive, or rather God's house, will keep you.

Go not into those companies, and meetings, where the false prophet, and unclean spirit are, and where false doctrine is taught; false doctrine is a great leaven. Ye read of three leavens in the New Testament: 1. The leaven of hypocrisy, Luke xii. 1. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." 2. The leaven of ill company, and society, 1 Cor. v. 6. "A little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump." 3. The leaven of false doctrine, Matt. xvi. 6. 11, 12; Gal. vi. 8, 9. "This persuasion, is not of him that calleth you; a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump," verse 9. Possibly all these three leavens may be in such a meeting: but the two last are certainly. And can you think to be under the power of these leavens, and to come away unleavened? It argues unsettledness to go to such a meeting; and by your going, you will be more settled in your unsettledness: as men are confirmed in that grace which they bring to God's ordinances: so they will be confirmed in that sin, which they carry to the devil's ordinances. Who can come freely off from the devil's ground? Will men tempt God, and think to prosper? And what is it to tempt God, but to put him upon an unnecessary protection, and preservation of us? Take

heed therefore, how you come at such meetings, lest you leaving God, he do leave you.

Whatever truth you know, do not only know it in a spiritual way, but put the same into practice; for he that knows truth carnally, is not far from error; and the way to be established in the truth, is to walk therein; "As ye have therefore received Christ (saith the apostle) so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith," Col. ii. 6, 7.

Then go to God for his establishing grace, and put your judgments into the hand of Christ to keep them for you: even as you would put your children, or family into God's hand, to keep them for you, when you are absent from them; so put your judgment into God's hand, to keep it for you also: for it is God alone who doth settle us, even the God of all grace; and he hath said, Prov. xvi. 3., "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established:" it is he that hangeth weights on the wings of the wind who hath founded the earth on nothing; and therefore though your thoughts be as fleeting and uncertain as the wind; yet he can hang weights upon them, he can make you solid, staid, sober, who do now stagger to and fro like a drunken man. And if you put your judgment into Christ's hand, he will keep it for you; for faithful is he who hath called you, who will also establish your hearts in the truth received.

But what shall I do, that I may be more settled in my life, and established in the good ways of God? for I want settlement in my ways and practises.

You must be very sensible of your own unsettledness, and be humbled for it: he is not far from grace, that is sensible of his sin, that is contrary to it; he is not far from humility, that is sensible of his pride; not far from sincerity, that is sensible of his hypocrisy; not far from faith, that is sensible of his unbelief; not far from establishment, that is very sensible of his own unsettledness.

Labour for a serious spirit, a staid, solid, and a serious spirit; a serious spirit, and an established heart go together, Prov. iv. 26., "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Young men generally, are more unsettled, than ancient men: and what is the reason of it, but

because ancient men are the more serious and ponderous? Young men are the less serious, and so the more unsettled. Labour therefore to be more serious, for the more you think of the greatness of God, and the great things of your everlasting estate and condition, the more serious you will be.

Be sure that you do not live upon your condition itself, but on the God of your condition: that is perpetual, which hath a perpetuating cause.* God is perpetual, but your condition is uncertain, although it be never so firm and good; therefore live not upon your condition I say, but on the God of your condition.

Take heed of a divided heart, that you have not a mind, and a mind: "The double-minded man, is unstable in all his ways," saith the apostle. Now a man may have a mind, and a mind thus; when his conscience runs one way, and his affection another way. So it was with Herod; his conscience told him, that John was a just, and an holy man, and a powerful preacher; therefore his mind was to deliver him; but his affection was to gratify the damsel which begged John's head, and so his mind was to kill him. Pilate also had a mind, and a mind; the mind of his conscience was to deliver Christ; but the mind of his affection, was to gratify and please the Jews. Zedekiah had a mind, and a mind; the mind of his conscience was to spare Jeremiah; but the mind of his affection was to gratify his nobles: and between these two minds, how unconstant was he? So now, if the mind of your conscience lie one way, and the mind of your affection lie another way, you will be wrung like Paul's ship, between two streams; one while you will be a servant unto your affection, another while a servant to your conscience, and so between both, you will never be settled: take heed therefore of this divided heart; the Lord hath promised to give us one heart, Ezek. xi., oneness in regard of God, that we shall be one with him; oneness in regard of men, that we shall be one with them: oneness in regard of our selves, that we shall not be divided in our own souls: therefore pray unto him for this oneness, and he will fulfil this his promise.†

* Perpetuum est quod habet causam perpetuantem.

† Et dabo eis cor unum. Mihi soli deserviens non idolis, nunc enim divisum quando habent cor quo et me et idola colunt sic interpretatur R. David eodemque

Be sure that you put on the whole armour of God; for if you do not withstand in the day of temptation, ye cannot stand; "for ye fight not with flesh and blood," saith the apostle, but with a more crafty, powerful enemy: and therefore, if any place lie open, he will be sure to find it out. You know how it was with Ahab; a man drew a bow, and shot an arrow at a venture, and wounded him between the joints of the harness. Now Satan knows where your naked, open place is, and therefore if you be not harnessed all over, with every duty, with every truth, and with every ordinance, you cannot withstand him: wherefore saith the apostle, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand; stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: Above all, take the shield of faith, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, and pray always with all manner of prayer, and supplication, and watch thereunto," &c. Eph. vi. 13—18.

The more delight and contentment that you find in the good ways of God, the more your hearts will be fixed, established, and staked down to them: comfort and establishment go together, 2 Thess. ii. 17. A man will never hold to that work long, which he finds no comfort and delight in: when the devil draws a man from duty, he doth not tell him at the first, that the duty is naught or evil; but he labours to clog the way of that duty with many difficulties; for saith he, if I can make this man draw heavily, and uncomfortably in his duty, he will soon cast it off. And indeed, what is the reason that men are so off and on, to and fro, in the good

sensu vertit Chald. Paraph. Alii cor unum. Simplex vocari putant quasi dicat faciam ut me simplici ac sincero animo colant: alii unum id est amicum atque consentiens quod in christianis factum fuisse scribit, Lucas, Act. 4. multitudinis autem credentiam erat cor unum et anima una. Septuag. videntur pro אחר legisse אחד alterum, verterunt enim *και δωσω αυτοις καρδιαν ἑτεραν* et dabo illis cor alterum. Novum qui sensus magnopere mihi placet, id enim videtur dicere voluisse cum dixit unum et cum dixit spiritum novum, confirmat hanc interpretationem, Ezek. xxxvi. 25., hanc eandem repetens sententiam non dixit dabo vobis cor unum, sed dabo vobis cor novum et spiritum novum quanquam Jer. xxxii. 39., cor unum et viam unam dixit quid autem vocet cor alterum et spiritum alterum declarat statim cum dicit auferam cor lapideum de carne eorum et dabo eis cor carneum.—Maldonat. in Ezek. xi. 19.

ways of God, but because they do not find delight and contentment in them? Do you therefore desire to be fixed and established? labour more and more then, to make your way to heaven easy and comfortable to you.

Now that the way to heaven may be made sweet and easy to you: be sure that you do not separate between God's commandment and his promise: there is no one thing which God hath commanded us to do, but he hath promised strength, and grace to perform it with: if I look upon the command alone, then the work doth seem hard to me; but if I take in the promise, then it is most sweet and easy. Be sure that you apply yourself unto God's work, according unto God's method; let that be first which he hath made first; and that last, which he hath made last: a faggot, or billet is easily drawn from the stack, if you begin aloft; but if you will take out that first, which doth lie below, it will come hardly: so in regard of duties; there are some duties which do lie above, and some that lie beneath; some are to be performed first, and some after: first you must believe, and then do good; "Trust in the Lord," saith the Psalmist, "and do good:" but if you will do good before you believe, then it will come off with difficulty. God's own method observed, makes his way sweet and easy. Be sure that you improve, and make use of that variety which God hath given you: *varietas resocillat*, variety refresheth, and God's variety is most refreshing: but if I will hold myself only to one duty, when God hath given me many, and so neglect God's variety, no wonder that his work is made hard and tedious: are you therefore weary with praying? Apply yourself unto reading. Are you weary in reading? Away then to conference. Possibly your heart may be backward to prayer; but by that time you have been a while reading and meditating, you shall be fit for prayer; and having been a while at prayer, you shall be more fit for conference: but if you will keep yourself only to one duty, your way to heaven will be more difficult. Observe therefore God's variety, and neglect not the same. Be sure that you do not stint yourself unto any work, or duty, so as to say, Thus far will I go, and no further. If a man be in a journey, and hath fixed all his stages, he rides in continual pain and fear, lest he should not reach his appointed place, by his time appointed: but if he say, I will go as

far as the providence of God will carry me, then he rides more at ease in his mind all the day long. So in our journey to heaven; if you say, Thus far I will go this day, and no further; then you will go in continual pain, lest you should not reach your appointed stage: but if you say, I will pray morning, evening, and as much as I can, hear as much as I can, read, and meditate as much as I can; I will go as far for heaven this day as I can, then the work of God will come off with more ease and sweetness, and with less difficulty: I speak not this against set times of prayer and duty: but against stinting and limiting God, and your own hearts. Oh, let us take heed of that. If you would so sweeten the ways of God, as that you may be more fixed and established therein, then labour more and more to naturalize them unto your own souls; violent things never hold, natural things do: the sun is constant in rising every morning, for it is natural: the stone, if thrown up into the air, will descend constantly; for it is natural. So, if the work of God be natural to you, you will be constant in it; and though you be put by it, yet you will return again, and again. Labour therefore to naturalize the work of God to your own soul; so shall it be more and more sweet and easy; and you will be more fixed, settled, and established therein; for it is delight that doth give fixation.

If you would be fixed and established in the good ways of God, then consider these ensuing motives: thereby you shall rid and free yourselves from temptations, which will otherwise press in and return upon you. The Jews saw that Pilate was wavering, and not fixed for Christ, so they came upon him with new volleys of temptations, and carried him at the last: but when the disciples saw that Paul's heart was fixed on his journey to Jerusalem, they gave over their siege, and left him to his own thoughts: and though Naomi did persuade Ruth to return unto her own country and kindred, yet at the last she left speaking to her, for saith the text, "She saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her," Ruth i. 18. As an unsettled spirit doth lie open unto new temptations, and doth invite them; so a settled, fixed and established heart shall be freed from them.

This fixation of soul is a great honour upon your profession, and thereby ye shall walk worthy of the gospel, Phil. i.; he

that is unsettled, unconstant and uneven in his course, doth bring no honour unto his profession, but lays stumbling-blocks before the blind, and doth offend the world. Do you not see, say they, what a giddy and unsettled people some of these professors are? But there or there is a man that doth walk closely with God; there is a christian indeed. He that keeps his constancy keeps his dignity.*

Thereby you shall rejoice the hearts of those that are set over you in the Lord, who do watch for your souls. If you stand fast, we live, say they, and your constancy is our rejoicing.

You have been constant in seeking earthly things, which are in their own nature unconstant; and will ye be constant in seeking unconstant things, and not constant in seeking those things that are most constant, and durable riches.†

If you be not constant in good, you will be constant in what is evil; if not settled in the truth, you will be tenacious of error. Which is the greatest evil, tenacity in error or instability in truth? I say not; but seldom any are unstable in good but they are most tenacious in what is evil.

And the more unsettled you are, the more you make the way to heaven difficult and uneasy: you think and say, Oh, this work of God is exceeding hard, and very difficult, and therefore you leave it off; then you come to it again, and then you leave it off again; but by your leaving it off you do make it difficult.‡ If a horse be ridden with an even hand, he will go well all the day; but if sometimes you ride him upon the spur, and then he stand awhile, and then ride him on the spur again, and then he stand and take cold again, he will sooner tire: and what is the reason that many men are so often jaded, tire, and give in, but because they do not keep an even pace in good? Now, therefore, as you do desire that the way to heaven may be more easy to you, that you may not be tenacious in what is evil, that you may not

* Qui servat constantiam, servat dignitatem.

† Multos annos laborant homines et constantes sunt pro rebus mundi inconstantibus et fugitivis; quia inconstantes sumus pro æterna et constanti gloria.

‡ Difficile putabis perseverare at difficilius est iterum incipere, multo molestius inceptare sepius, equi minorem vim faciunt cum continuant iter, trahentes currum quam cum repetere volunt postquam steterunt: non fugiunt difficultatem qui cessant ab opere, nam perseverando facilius fiet, si potuisti incipere quod difficilius est poteris continuare facilius.—Euseb. Nierem. de Adorat. lib. iii. c. 7.

grieve the ministers of the gospel, instruments of your good and conversion, that you may not lie open unto sad and new temptations, and that you may not be a scandal to the good name of God; for what hurt hath the precious name of God done to you? labour to be more settled, fixed and established; which that you may be, think and think much on these motives.

And, lastly, go to God by prayer for this fixation and establishment of soul, he is apt and ready to pardon your former unevenness and want of establishment. In Psalm lxxviii. 37, it is said of the Israelites, that "they were not stedfast in the covenant; yet God, being merciful, forgave their iniquity," verse 38. And he it is alone who hangeth weights on the wings of the wind; and therefore though your spirits have been as light as the wind itself, yet he will hang weights upon them; therefore go to him, for he is the God of all grace, who having called you to his eternal glory, after you have suffered awhile, will restore, strengthen, stablish and settle you.

SERMON XIII.

BABYLON'S DOWNFALL.

PREACHED AT WESTMINSTER, BEFORE SUNDRY OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS, A. D. 1641,

---

PREFACE.

GOOD READER,—Thou hast, I doubt not, heard with what difficulty and pains this small work is brought forth, and delivered into the world; let the difficulty of printing quicken thine affection in reading. As the fall of Babylon is much expected, so the rising of the churches is much desired. Thy prayers and our pains may help forward both. Wherefore, that I might not be wanting to this great service, I am willing that these notes should walk abroad, which I thought should never see more light than what crept in at my study windows. This sermon may prove all the legacy which your dying friend shall be able to bequeath unto you; for I am now returning to that church and people of God, which Jesus Christ hath committed to me and others. And if in this voyage, the Lord shall put the winds and seas in commission for my death, my desire is

First, That God would forgive our adversaries, if it be his will, that have put us to these extremities.

Secondly, That it may be ever said of this island, as once it was said of Israel: "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thine help, and the sword of thine excellency," Deut. xxxiii. 29.

Thirdly, That *falling* Babylon may be *fallen* Babylon; and that all the *distressed* churches may be *restored* churches. *Vivat Christus moriatur Barrabas, moriatur Antichristus.*

For the first we have great cause to forgive, seeing all their injuries are turned unto our blessings. And therefore as Joseph said to his brethren that sold him into a strange country, "As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good: now, therefore, fear not," &c. Yet we know that public administration of justice is not contrary to personal forgiveness. We must confess, that the leaving of our own dear country, was and is most afflictive to us: a trouble to leave our good friends, convenient houses, precious liberties, and so many souls under the hazard of your eternities. But Luther's counsel is good: *Si nolint vos ferre in ditione sua non frangatur animus ad cessandum ad deferendum verbum et officium, sed perseverandum et docendum, si non in hoc loco saltem in alio. At iterum dices quid si nullo loco liceat, sed ubique; ejiciamur in toto mundo, respondet Christu nolite solliciti esse. Antequam id eveniret ut nullus locus amplius sit verbo, ego adero meo adventu, erit igitur semper locus ubi doceatis donec ego veniam, tantum vos perdurate el salvi eritis, non expedietis omnes civitates Israel quin filius hominis veniet.*—Luther loc. com. de piis exulibus. "If they will not suffer you where they have to do, let not your mind be troubled to cease from your work, or desert your office, but teach and persevere; if it be not lawful in one place, it may be in another. But thou wilt say, What if it be lawful in no place, and that we be every where cast out in the

whole world? Christ answers, Be not solicitous; before it come to pass, that no place be left for the word, I will be present by my coming; there shall always be a place where you may teach till I shall come: only do you hold on, and you shall be saved: you shall not have gone over all the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man shall come."

So that according to Luther, and the truth, though the persecutions of the churches be never so great, yet there shall always be some place free and open, as a city of refuge for God's people to fly unto, and hide themselves in, till Christ shall come by public deliverance for the churches.

For the second. You have seen what great things the Lord hath done for you; believest thou because of these, thou shalt see greater, only let us follow the star of heavenly and divine guidance, which hath led us along all this while, and not go in to consult with the scribes and pharisees of the times, with those that say they are Jews, and are not: so shall our star, the Scripture, lead us more clearly to the place and house where Christ is. Neither be thou ashamed to receive and own the truth and way of Christ, though it be despised. The wise men did worship Christ in a manger.

And for the third, I shall not prophesy if I say, the sword is now drawn, whose anger shall not be pacified till Babylon be down, and Sion raised. Yet if thou shalt meet with another suffering bout, in patience possess thy soul, in faith thy God, in love thy neighbour. And know that it is God's usual way to bring his best servants to his choice blessings by tedious bouts. Exod. xiii. 18. In the interim observe diligently what God is now doing, and help forward the work of God what you can. *Quod Deus facit pro nobis facit in nobis.* And as you would read and study some choice book to get learning, so read, attend, and study every page, line, and letter of this great volume of the Lord's works which is now extant; be in commons with the Lord's people. "The works of the Lord are sought out of all those that have pleasure in them," saith the psalmist.

Finally, good reader, pray for us, that we may stand complete in all the will of God; and though the malice of some men hath been so great, that we may not live together in one land, yet the mercy of God is so rich, that we may live together in one heaven.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever." Amen.

Thine in Christ,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

"*Babylon is fallen, is fallen, the great city,*" *&c.*—REV. xiv. 8.

THIS text hath connection with the present times, and the preceding words; for the Holy Ghost having made a description of the state and condition of the church of Christ, in verses 1—5, comes in ver. 6 to make mention of another vision which St. John saw, and that is of an angel flying in the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel; which is said to be everlasting, in opposition to those innovations and

traditions of men, under which the churches of Christ had laboured a long time. This vision being past, as a right consequent of the former vision, he sees another angel, crying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," verse 8. And no wonder, for where the everlasting gospel is preached in the midst of heaven, that is openly, there Babylon falls, and falls immediately.

The words themselves are a short, and sweet prophecy of Rome's ruin and destruction. Wherein we have:

The description of Rome itself.

The description of her destruction.

She is described two ways:

1. From her *greatness*, called the great city. Indeed she hath been great in large possessions, and great revenues, so she is fallen already in a great measure, yet she is too great. Great in her opinion with kings and princes, and thus she is fallen already in a great measure, yet still too great. Great in her authority and power over the saints, and churches of Christ, and from this greatness she is much fallen already, and yet too great.

2. From her *sins* that she is guilty of, under that word Babylon. For if we consult with this book of the Revelation, we shall find that the church of Rome, and that party is called Egypt, Sodom, and Babylon, as if the wickednesses of them all were concentred in her.

Egypt was exceeding harsh and cruel to the church, and Israel of God: so are they.

Sodom was exceeding base and filthy in corporal uncleanness; and so are they.

Babylon full of sorceries and idolatry, so are they. She is called Babylon.

Her destruction is described, and that two ways.

1. From the fulness and greatness thereof, therefore she is said to *fall*, and not once, but again *fallen, fallen*. As it is God's way to reward those that are good with the good which they most desire; so it is his way to punish the wicked with that punishment which is most contrariant to their dispositions, and their own humours. Babylon, and the Babylonish company most affect rising, and great preferment; contrary their punishment shall be that it may be

most vexatious to them, they shall *fall*, their destruction is called a *fall*.

2. From the certainty thereof. It is put in the present tense, as if it were already done. The words are repeated, "It is fallen, it is fallen.

Hardly a word but it affords its several observation. Yet because I would not cut out more bread than we shall eat at one meal, I will fall, and close with these especially.

Antichristian and Romish Babylon is truly Babylon.

Though this Babylon be never so great, yet it shall fall. It will fall assuredly.

It is the duty of the saints, and people of God to speak of this fall as if it were done already.

Antichristian Romish Babylon, is truly Babylon. Herein I shall parallel the old and our late Babylon. I shall prove that by this Babylon is meant Rome. In the Old Testament we read of a Babylon wherein Israel was once captived, that was heathenish Babylon. In the New Testament we read here and in divers other places of another Babylon, antichristian Babylon. Give me leave to parallel them a little.

Heathenish Babylon was the metropolitan, or the chief city of the Chaldees, full of trade and merchandize, insomuch as she calls herself the queen of the world, "who sat upon many waters," Jer. li. xiii. So it is with our late Babylon, who calls herself the queen sitting upon many waters, which is also interpreted by St. John, to be "peoples, multitudes, and nations," Rev. xvii. 15.

Babylon of old was a proud people, and very confident, exceeding delicate, and very wanton, calling herself a "lady for ever," Isa. xlvii. 7, 8. Thus antichristian Babylon sits also. Rev. xviii. 7, "She hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

This wanton and delicate place of old was full of sorcerers and soothsayers. Isa. xlvii. 12, 13, "Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth," &c. Therefore we read that in Daniel's time they came before the king to tell him the meaning of his dream, but could not. So it is with our late Babylon, wherein are many sorceries and sorcerers. Rev. ix. 21; xviii. 23.

Heathenish Babylon was exceeding full of idols and vile idolaters, the mother of them, and therefore we read, that the three children were commanded to worship the king's idol, Dan. iii. Answerably it is said of our late Babylon, that she doth "make all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication," Rev. xvii. 2.

As ancient Babylon was full of idols, and gross idolaters, so also it was exceeding cruel to the church and people of God. Ps. cxxxvii. 1, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea we wept, when we remembered Sion," &c. Who hath not read of the Babylonish captivity, the fiery furnace, and their den of lions. Answerably in this late Babylon is "found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth," Rev. xviii. 24.

The destruction of ancient Babylon was great, and very dreadful. For,

It was universal. Isa. xlvii. 14, "There shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before." And Is. xiv. 22, "For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord."

It was very sudden. Is. xlvii. 9, "In a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in perfection."

It was irrevocable. Jer. li. 63, 64, "And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates. And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her."

Answerably the destruction of our late Babylon is very dreadful. For,

It shall be universal. Rev. xviii. 23, "The light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee."

It shall be sudden. Rev. xviii. 8, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, in one hour."

It shall be irrevocable. Rev. xviii. 21, "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

Because of all these things, great sins, and great destruc-

tions, the people of God were commanded to depart and go out of old Babylon. Jer. li. 6, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul." And verse 45, "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul," &c. In like manner we find that the Holy Ghost having given warning to the world concerning the fall of this late Babylon, he exhorteth his people to go out from the midst of her, Rev. xviii. 4, "Come out of her my people," &c.

Thus are these two Babylons paralleled, certainly they are, and shall be exceeding like one to another in these particulars. But the question now is, who is here meant in the Revelation by this late Babylon; indeed this is a question of much concernment, because she is to fall, the princes of the earth are to be provoked to eat her flesh, and drink her blood, and we are all to depart from her, lest we partake with her in her plagues.

By this late Babylon therefore, we understand the church of Rome; not as confined within her walls, but as by her merchants she tradeth with, and putteth off her commodities to other kingdoms. Rome in her latitude, with all her merchants, and those that symbolize with her, is here to be understood. And that Rome and no other is here meant, I prove by these reasons:

Babylon is here in my text called "the great city," and in St. John's time, what was the great city but Rome itself? for suppose a man were in France, and should hear another say, that such and such a work were to be done in the great city, who would not know that he meant Paris? or suppose a man in England should hear another say, that some great work were to be done in the great city, who would not know that he meant London? In St. John's time the Roman empire prevailing, the great city was Rome itself; and therefore the Holy Ghost saying, that Babylon was the great city, saith expressly, that by Babylon is meant Rome.

This city and whore of Babylon, is said to sit upon a beast, Rev. xvii. 7. Now if we look into the book of Daniel, whereby much of the Revelation is to be interpreted, we shall find mention of four beasts to succeed one another, which is there interpreted to be four kingdoms or monarchies. The first of the Chaldees. The second of the

Medes and Persians. The third of the Grecians. And the fourth of the Romans. Now before John's time, the three first beasts were dead, and gone; the fourth and last only remained, the Roman empire. And what city or people hath so ridden the Roman empire, as Rome hath done?

St. John tells us, that this beast that carried the woman, this city was to have "seven heads, and ten horns," Rev. xvii. 7, which the Holy Ghost interpreted in the same chapter, saying, "These seven heads are seven mountains," verse 9, or "seven kings," that is, several sorts of government, verse 10. And the ten horns are ten kings or kingdoms, verse 12, which this empire did break into. Now though some think, whilst they look through false perspectives, that they see some other city sitting upon seven hills, yet let any man shew us these three met together in any other city. Who knows any other city whose building hath been laid on seven hills, so famous that the city itself is called *Septiros*, and whose government hath been of seven sorts, and whose empire hath been broken asunder into ten kingdoms, or thereabouts? This we know is agreeable to Rome itself, and therefore Rome and no other people is here meant by Babylon.

The Scripture is most express, telling us, *totidem verbis*, that that city which in St. John's time reigned over the kings of the earth, was Babylon, Rev. xvii. 18, "And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." But in St. John's time no other city than Rome reigned over the kings of the earth, and therefore that, and that alone is truly Babylon, that is, our late Babylon. Whereupon Cornelius a Lapide, considering also how Irenæus, Lactantius, Jerome, and other ancients, speak fully to our purpose, professes that he will not *tergiversari*, but granteth, that by Babylon is meant Rome.

If so, what ill office have they done to the church and people of God, that obtrude this position upon us, That the church of Rome is a true church. But was Babylon a true church? was Sodom a true church? was Egypt a true church? Rome is Sodom, Egypt, and truly Babylon. Oh, what abundance of hurt and mischief hath this dangerous position done, that the church of Rome is a true church! I myself have known

some that had relinquished the church of Rome, and written against her, who again staggered in their faith, I wish I might not say they were revolted, when they saw this opinion countenanced, and published by great authority. And what say the papists? Your own men, say they, hold that the church of Rome is a true church, and that salvation is to be had in her; as for the church of England it is a schismatical, heretical church, wherein no salvation is to be had. The safest way therefore is to join with us, where, according to all men, both ours and yours, you may be sure of your salvation. And indeed the argument were very strong, and home, if the premises were true. But when it shall appear by Scripture, that Sion is called Babylon, and Babylon called Sion, then, and not till then will I believe that Rome is a true church. I know what some urge, namely, that antichrist, that man of sin, is to sit in the house of God, and therefore that the church of Rome is the house, and church of God. But if we consult with the original, we shall find that the words are not εν τω ναω in the house, but εις τον ναω upon, or against the house of God; so Austin, and others turn it. *Upon;* noting his tyranny and usurped government, so the coherent words also give it, "He shall sit exalting himself above all that is called God." The whole words being nothing else, but a description of his proud government and vile tyranny.

If antichristian and Romish Babylon be truly Babylon, then set yourselves in array against her round about. I mean not in way of warlike hostility, oh that all your swords were turned into ploughshares, my exhortation is no other than that of the prophet Jeremiah, concerning old Babylon, chap. l. 14, "Put yourselves in array against Babylon, round about all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows, for she hath sinned against the Lord." It is the wisdom of every man, to observe what design God hath upon the world, a kingdom, or place, and to be in our callings serviceable, and helpful to God's designs. God will help us, if we help him. We love to be on the strongest side, and God is strongest. Now is the time that God is bearing down the walls of proud Babylon, that are raised up in every kingdom. Magistrates, ministers, people, help. Help,

oh, you that love the Lord, help the Lord, down with them, down with them even to the ground.

But what shall we do to help forward the fall of Babylon? Either you are of public place, or private station. If you be of a private station, yet you ought to be of a public spirit. If you be of public place, give me leave to tell you out of God's word what to do, and yet I will not so much direct you to what you are not doing, as encourage you from Scripture in what you are doing.

Therefore ye worthies of our Israel, it lies upon you to search out, and inquire after this Babylonish company, and to repay them according to their demerits. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, burning for burning, ear for ear, liberty for liberty, and blood for blood." We find in the Old Testament, that if there were a noise and report of idolatry in the land, the magistrate was not barely to take information, but to make diligent search, Deut. xiii. 12—15, "If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain men of the children of Belial are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which you have not known. Then shalt thou enquire and make search, and ask diligently," &c. And in the verses before you may see their punishment, verse 6—10. And who knows not that of the Psalmist, Ps. cxxxvii. 8, 9. "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed: happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh, and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." Though as little ones they call for pity, yet as Babylonish little ones they call for justice, even to blood. You may think it cruel, but there is nothing cruel which God commands. Indeed father Latimer in his sermon before king Edward the sixth, is exceeding earnest, that popish prelates might be made *quondams*, as, saith he, Abiathar the high priest was, because he laboured to keep king Solomon from his throne. And behold a greater than Solomon, Christ Jesus in the government of his church is here. And there is a notable Scripture for this, Ezek. xliv. 10—15, "And the Levites that are gone away far from me when Israel went astray from me after their idols, they shall even bear their iniquity." verse 13, "They

shall not come near unto me to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things in the most holy place," &c. Whence it appears, that those which were unfaithful, superstitious, following innovations when Israel went astray and followed idols, were to be thrust from their places, and to be made *quondams* for ever. This now the magistrate may see into, I prescribe not, I leave with you this general. It is your duty to search and inquire after these persons, and to punish them according to their deservings.

It is in you also to call for days of public humiliation, fasting, prayer, and soul-affliction. It will be said this hath been done already. True, it hath been done, and much good hath been done thereby in heaven; but when a man lays his ears to the several committees, and hears what a world of evil is discovered in each committee; what filthiness, and lewdness of filthiness in this and that priest, in this and that officer; how can a man but break forth, and say, or rather sob, Good Lord, what a lamentable condition was this poor land in? Oh, that the weight of our sins should not break the axle tree of God's patience. Oh, that we are a nation to this day. And then is there not yet need of more tears, humiliation, and soul afflictions? Of all the reformed churches in the world, England hath borne the name, and worn the crown for the life and power of godliness; yet give me leave with grief of heart, and sadness of spirit, to make a challenge: What reformed church is there in all the world, that ever knew so many suspended ministers as England? Speak, O Sun, whether in all thy travels from one end of the heaven to the other, thou didst ever see so many silenced ministers as thou hast done here. And is there not then need of more humiliation, more fasting, and prayer, more self-afflictions, and more tears? I will lead you but to one Scripture, and leave it with you, Ezek. xliii. 10, 11, "Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done; shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof," &c. I know not such

another text in all the Bible, as this is for this purpose. One man says, the government of the church of England is the best; another, that the Scottish government is the best; a third, that a third is best; another, Oh, that I knew what were the government and form of God's house, prescribed by God himself. Well. Wouldst thou know? "If you be ashamed of your own iniquities, God will shew you the form of his house."

It is with you also, right worthy and beloved, to see that all the ordinances of Jesus Christ, be rendered to the churches in their native beauty, and that all the relics, and remains of Babylon be quite removed. *Opus marmoreum albario non indiget.* True marble needs no painting. And God's ordinance is all marble, no chalk, True beauty needs no colouring; and the most deformed of God's ordinances to a gracious eye, is truly beautiful. Great is the pomp of God's ordinances, when freed from pomp, great is *their* glory when freed from *ours.* Every ordinance is then best administered, when it is most effectual, and a thing is most full of efficacy, when it is *plenum sui, immixtum alieni.* As wine or water which doth most cool, or cleanse when freed from mixtures.

In the primitive times when the heathen would put the christians to a cruel death, they tied a living man to a dead man, that so by the filthy savour, and stench of the dead carcase, they might poison the living man to death; this they counted the worst of death; the death of deaths. So when the dead ordinances of man's inventions, shall be tied to the living ordinances of God's appointment; what is this, but as much as in us lies to poison the living with the dead? But I pray tell me, what unkindness hath the good ordinance of Christ done to us, that we should put it to so sad a death. And as Christ said to the Jews, "I have done many good works amongst you, for which of all these do you take up stones against me? so may the ordinances of Christ say, Oh, ye people of England, I have done many good works among you; I have converted many of you by preaching to you; I have healed many of you that were sore bruised; I have comforted many of you that were sore troubled; for which of all these do you use me thus unkindly; for which of all these do you thus tie and link me to that, which never

entered into the heart of God to match me with? What Luther says concerning preaching, that may I say, concerning all the ordinances of God. We that are ministers, saith he, think to take our people with our expressions, and if we light upon an expression that pleaseth us well, we think that it should convert every one that hears it from us; but when the auditor comes, *et hominem olet*, he smells man in the expression, turns his back upon it, and the whole vanisheth, and comes to nothing. The explication is plain and easy.

Wherefore, I beseech you, in Christ's stead, that are the heads of our tribes, that nothing be obtruded upon the churches of Christ; but what may clearly, and plainly have *Jus divinum* written and engraven upon it. Your wisdoms cannot but observe the several distractions that are both in church and common-wealth. If you analyze the distractions of the common-wealth, you may find thereby what is the head of our distractions in the church also. And in the common-wealth this is that which troubles, that proceedings are so illegal; Oh, says one, though it cost me never so much, yet if it were according to law, I would yield unto it. This is that which cuts so deep, says another, there is no law for these, and these courses: so in the church, I cannot yield to this, and that custom, this and that innovation, for there is no law for it.

But if a thing be indifferent, and authority command it, then *Jus divinum* is written upon it.

It is the wisdom of authority to preserve the churches in that liberty, wherein Christ hath left them, for authority is *Tabularum custos, non author*.

If a thing be indifferent in its own nature, and the doing thereof offensive to a weak brother, authority cannot write *Jus divinum* upon it; for to offend a weak brother is to destroy him, 1 Cor. viii. 11. And the destruction of a weak brother, is the breach of the moral law. Now we all know, that authority cannot write *Jus divinum* upon the breach of the moral law.

Solomon saith, Eccles. xii. 13, "Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." As God is an all-sufficient being for a man to live upon, so God's word is an all-sufficient rule for a man to live by. And if we look into Isa. xxx. 22, we shall find that God doth not

only command that the images themselves should be destroyed, but that "their coverings should be defiled." I remember what Master Dering said in a sermon before queen Elizabeth. There hath been much dust in the house, and though for the present the house be swept, yet the dust is but laid behind the door, and a hen will come that will spread it all abroad again. Wherefore, I beseech you take heed, that there be no dust left in the house of God in any corner. Give us the ordinances of Christ in their naked and own colours, so shall they be blest to us, we under them and you by them.

It is with you also to set up burning, and shining lights in every candlestick of the kingdom. First, that the candlestick be rightly fashioned; secondly, that the lights therein be duly settled with golden snuffers, not brazen extinguishers. This is a special help to the fall of Babylon, for ye heard from the context, that no sooner did there an angel fly through the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel, that is, preaching openly; but another angel followed presently, crying, "Babylon is fallen." You know, that contraries have contrary consequences. Babylon was built by ignorance, therefore the papists say, Ignorance is the mother of devotion, and they say truly; for indeed ignorance is the mother of their devotion; therefore they use their friends, that the people may be put off with matins, and even-song, that so our ignorance might be an inlet to their devotion. Wherefore then let there be an angel sent, that is a ministry flying in the midst of heaven, that is openly, and not by stealth, preaching the eveslasting gospel to every place and congregation, then will Babylon fall, and fall immediately.

These be your duties.

But it is exceeding hard and very difficult to do these: a perfect and full reformation is very good, and necessary, but exceeding hard and difficult.

True, but did not Abraham's sacrifice hang in the briars and bushes? Ye read that when Isaac should have been sacrificed, God provided a sacrifice, but that sacrifice did first hang in the briars. Ye are the children of Abraham, and if you would offer a sacrifice of God's own, a sacrifice that should be pleasing to him, make account that it must hang in the briars, bushes, and many difficulties.

The heathen could say, Virtue grows upon the rocks; and if the extirpation of Babylon, with the reformation of true religion, were not a hard work, it were not fit for a parliament to do. They are met to untie such knots as none else can untie. The heathen king said to a poor man, Though this gift be too great for you to receive, yet it is not too great for me to give. Either it is of God that you are assembled, or else it is not; if it be not why sit you here, if it be, can any thing be too hard for God? Wherefore, let your faith laugh in the face of difficulties. For as unbelief will make a thing difficult though never so easy, so faith will make a thing easy though never so difficult.

But this work is not only exceeding hard and difficult, but very dangerous. In great reformations there must be some alterations, and alterations cannot be without danger and trouble.

There is much difference between smart and danger. If a man have rotten and aching teeth in his head, though the pulling them out be exceeding troublesome, and full of ache, and smart even to bleeding of the gums, and vexation of all the body, yet there is no danger, much smart, but no danger. So in regard of the church and common-wealth, though the pulling out of some rotten members may cause a bleeding, make trouble, and some disturbance, yet there is no danger, some ache, but no danger.

Many things seem to be dangerous at a distance, that are not so at hand. When Moses' rod was at a distance from him, it was turned to a serpent, and he fled from it; but when he took it by the tail at God's command, it was his rod in his hand again. Prisons, banishments, miseries, at a distance are serpents to us; when we come to them, are exceeding comfortable, and our rods in our hands.

Suppose there were danger in a reformation, and extirpation of all that is Babylon's, yet there is more danger in want of reformation. Vomiting physic is very troublesome, but disease more. He that ventures against Babylon, at the worst can but lose his life, which may be taken away by the fall of some tile, or the turning of some humour in our body; but he that partakes with Babylon in her sin, shall partake with her in her plagues and punishments to all eternity. What a trouble did Achan cause, yet he was but

one man, his act one, and the Babylonish garment but one. Oh what trouble will it be then to suffer many Achans, and that continually? Augustine says, that when the Jews would not acknowledge Christ, lest the Romans should come, and take their place, in preventing loss, they lost most. They would not lose their earth, and they lost their heaven; they would not lose their place, and they lost their God.

But suppose that there were the most danger in the best reformation, is there not enough in heaven to pay for all? Nay, my beloved, even on this side heaven, there is no loss by Christ in losing for Christ; *non habendo habemus*, in not having, we have. I remember what was written of *fortis Zisca*, and, as my author says, written upon his tomb in his epitaph, thus, Eleven times in joining battle, I went victor out of the field, I seemed worthily to have defended the cause of the miserable and hungry, against the delicate, fat, and gluttonous priests, and for that cause to have received help at the hand of God. Mark the emphasis, it lies there, *And for that cause.* But ye have an example of Jehoshaphat, which is exceeding full, and much encouraging, 2 Chron. xvii. 3, "And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David." He brought up reformation to the first institution, and he was full therein, for it is said, "he walked in the first ways," not in the last, "of his father David," and sought not to Baalim, "Nor after the doings of Israel," verse 4. And see what followed, "Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand, and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents, and he had riches, and honour in abundance," verse 5. The prophet Haggai is most express, and bids them compute, whether that from the very day that they set their hands to the building of the temple, God did not build them up in outward mercies. Certainly, my beloved, the only way to gain, is to lose for God. It is a greater mercy to have, that I may lose for God, than that I may keep for my posterity.

But suppose that a man be in place of authority, and find that his heart is exceeding dull and dead, and backward to this work of reformation, what should he do that may give wings to his affections, that may move and quicken up his spirit in this particular?

In this case let him put himself upon the exercise of his

authority in the execution of justice. For it is with the magistracy herein, as with the ministry, the way to preach, is to preach; the way to prayer, is prayer; *Iter ad gratiam est gratia,* the way to grace is grace. God is pleased sometimes to come in with fresh strength, and to give new assistance in the heat of preaching. So in the acts of magistracy, God comes in also in the dispensation thereof.

In that case present your souls with that great trust that is committed to you, and put upon you. If a minister when he is banding away his precious hours between this and that play-book; or when he is most prodigal of his people's time, for it is their's not his; if then I say when he is most idle, and indisposed to those great services, he could but realize a congregation, and present before him the many souls that depend upon him, and as it were hear them calling out unto him: Oh, sir, study, study for our souls, study for our eternity; certainly this would awaken, move, and put life into him. So if those that are in authority and place of magistracy, would but present themselves with those many thousands that have entrusted them with their liberties, estates, lives, I had almost said consciences, and eternities, surely it would be exceeding quickening and helpful.

Consider your present opportunity. Opportunity once lost, is never recovered. My words shall know no flattery; never did England see a parliament more fitted for the service and work of God than this now is. A quiver so full of chosen and polished shafts for the Lord's work. I have often thought that God would deal by our present parliamentary assembly, as Samson did deal with the jaw-bone, wherewith he had slain heaps of the Philistines, which when he had done, he threw it away; but afterwards thirsting, and being like to die for want of water, God sent him back to his jaw-bone again, and tells him that he would cleave that, and open a fountain of water to him from thence. So hath God used this great parliamentary ordinance for the slaying of many Philistines; but, in these latter times, this jaw-bone of ours hath been thrown away, and despised in the eyes of the world; and it may be now God will open a fountain of water from hence, that we may all be revived and live thereby. Wherefore then let all those that are of this honourable assembly think: It may be God hath raised me up to this

time, all the while I was at the university, God was laying in of abilities in my education for this occasion; and shall I lose this opportunity, *Opportunitas indicat virum*, opportunity shews the man, and makes the man, and sometimes hath the casting voice for man's eternity.

Consider this also, that if reformation be not now wrought, our sin and guilt will be greater than ever it was. This parliament time is a commencement time for good or evil; take a good work, and though it were never so private, and personal, yet if it pass in this house, it does commence national: so take an evil, and though it were never so private before, yet if it pass here, it will take a higher degree, and commence national wickedness; this is a fearful evil, and very dreadful, that a personal sin should become national. I know you are unwilling that any sin should steal its degree; as therefore you do desire that no personal sin shall become national, I beseech you in Christ's stead, let the reformation be full and perfect, and let every man say: Babylon shall fall, I also will have a hand in it, and shoulder at it. "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground."

And if you be a minister, you know your duty; only, as Luther phrases it, let your knowledge be incarnate into godly practice; good works are faith incarnate, knowledge incarnate. Now you read Joshua iii. 13, 15, 17, that when the children of Israel went through Jordan, these priests that bare the ark of the Lord, were first to enter upon the waters, and to stay in the midst of them, till all Israel passed over. The water doth note affliction, the feet of those that bare the ark are to be first in danger, and there to stand till all be over. In the place before mentioned, Ezek. xliv. 10—12, God's threatening is very terrible. As if he should say, As for those Levites that go astray when Israel goes astray, and do admit the uncircumcised in heart to mine holy things, though they be suffered in mine house, yet they shall but do the out-works thereof, as for those inward things of mine house and self, they shall not be admitted to them, nor trusted with them. Though they may preach some outward truths, which they may read of in books, yet for those inward secret heart things of the covenant, I will never trust them with them, they shall not draw near to me. Oh, therefore beloved, that we could deny our own knowledge,

wisdoms, parts, gifts, liberties, and all that is ours in this great service.

But if a man's condition and state be private, what must he do to help forward the fall of Babylon?

Take heed that thou do nothing to hinder God's public design by your private practices, put away the evil of all your doings, lest your private wickedness do *ponere obicem* to God's providence.

Achan's wickedness was committed in the dark, and with much privacy, yet what influence had it into public misery.

Miriam and Aaron murmured against Moses, and envied at him, for which she was stricken with leprosy whereby the whole congregation was stayed, and their march hindered. It is said, 2 Chron. xx. 33, that the high places were not pulled down, "because the people were not prepared for the Lord;" not because the *prince* was not prepared, or the *great ones* not prepared, but because the *people* were not prepared. It is in regard of truth, as in regard of error in this particular, though the baker may have kneaded his dough, that is, his false opinion, and made it ready, yet as the prophet Hosea speaks, and as Zanchy interprets the place, he sets not in, till the oven be heated, that is, the heart of the people warmed and prepared for it. So for a truth also, or a public mercy and deliverance, though God have provided it for a people, yet it is not handed to them, and set in, till their hearts be warmed and prepared for it. You may observe therefore, that when David had made his penitential psalm for his own sin, Ps. li., after much supplication for the pardon of his own evil, and for grace, and comfort he comes at last in the 18th verse to this petition: "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Sion," &c. How comes that in here? Yes, when a man hath once repented of his own sin, and cleared that reckoning, then he is fittest to ask mercy for the church, and till then unfit. Therefore though in regard of your own souls, your own eternity, you will not part with your own sins, yet if you have any pity, any compassion, any bowels towards your own country, or churches of God, put away the evil of all your doings.

Though your condition be never so private, you may discover the ways of Babylon, the works and complotments of the Babylonish party: and the discovery of evil is half its

ruin, as the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. iii. 9, "They shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be made manifest to all."

You may believe down the walls of Babylon. Faith removes mountains, though it be but a grain; by it the walls of Jericho fell, in the blowing of those poor rams' horns. And the walls of Jericho were built up to heaven, surely then the walls of Babylon cannot be higher. Wherefore seek out those promises and threatenings, set your heart towards them, bear yourselves upon them, urge, and press God by virtue of them, and say, though it be very unlikely that Babylon should fall, yet God hath thus and thus promised, thus and thus threatened, and he is faithful, here I will stay, and here I will wait.

You may spread the blasphemies of the Babylonish faction in the eyes of heaven. Thus did Hezekiah when Rabshakeh blasphemed, and we know how it prevailed. Great and grievous have the blasphemies been wherewith the men of Babylon have blasphemed the saints of God, and the footsteps of his anointed, which God takes as done against himself, and so repays them, Ezek. xxxv. 12, compared with the 13th verse. In the 12th verse it is said, "I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, they are laid desolate, they are given us to consume:" but in the 13th verse these words are charged upon them, as if they were spoken against God himself: "That with your mouth you have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me." Therefore at the 14th verse follows the punishment. The spreading of their hellish blasphemies, is exceeding prevalent with God, and very potent.

You may use all the interest you have in heaven, and whatsoever credit you have there, improve it, which we beseech you do now in this particular. Your prayers puts them under God's curse.

Though your condition and station be never so private, you may according to your place, curse the practices and complotments of all the enemies. Doth not Jacob seem to pronounce a curse upon the practices of Simeon and Levi, though his own children, Gen. xlix. 7, "Cursed be their wrath for it was cruel, &c., for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall." What

is the endeavour of the Babylonians, but to dig down the walls of Jerusalem, and of our protection. Oh, my soul come not thou into their secret. God hath commanded that Meroz should be cursed, and cursed bitterly; because they went not forth to help the Lord against the mighty. How bitterly then are they to be cursed, that go forth to help the mighty against the Lord.

It was a statute and a law in Israel, that if any removed the ancient landmarks, he shall be cursed. "Cursed," says the text, "shall he be that removes the ancient landmarks, and let all the people say Amen." What is the ancient landmark of England, but our laws and religion? and therefore if any man shall remove this our landmark, cursed shall he be, of the Lord cursed, and let all the people say Amen.

Whatever personal injury hath been done unto you by any of the enemies of the churches, you may, you must pass them by, so far as it is a private concernment, and you shall not lose hereby, your forgiveness hastens their ruin. For this cause, as you may read Numb. xii. 2, 3, 4, God himself took vengeance on Miriam, because Moses was a meek man. See how the mention of his meekness is brought in by way of parenthesis at ver. 3, as the cause of God's proceedings against her, ver. 4. Wherefore, my beloved, have any been wronged and injured by your and God's enemies, carry it meekly, carry it humbly, no revenge, no revenge, but all forgiveness. And have they begun to fall before you, let there be much rejoicing, but no insulting; praises, but no insulting; prayer still, but no insulting. Let your moderation be known to all, for God is at hand. These are your duties; which things if they be in you and abound, in due time Babylon shall fall, and you shall see it; for the next doctrine tells us it:

Though antichristian and Romish Babylon be never so great, yet it shall fall, and fall assuredly.

This is but equal: those that have fallen from God, shall fall by God; those that have made others to fall, shall fall themselves. Now the man of sin is the star that is fallen from heaven, who in 2 Thess. ii. 3, as some observe, is called in the abstract, *apostacy*, not an apostate, a *falling away*, not one that is fallen away, so notorious is he for sinful falling

And as God rewards grace with his own grace, so he rewards sin with its own likeness.

How else shall Sion rise, if Babylon do not fall? It is said, when the Lord exalteth the low tree, he bringeth down the high tree, then shall all the trees of the forest rejoice. God is making way to such a jubilee, therefore Babylon must fall, and that assuredly.

Those that are too big for themselves, and cannot manage their own greatness, must needs fall. Pride goes before a fall. It is the natural genius of Babylon to be proud and great, great and proud. Babel was at first built to affront providence, that the world might be no more drowned. Afterwards says that king, in Daniel, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for mine honour?" And, Rev. xviii., saith our late Babylon, "I sit a queen," &c. They have been great, and in their own eyes great, surely therefore their own weight shall sink them.

Must not those needs fall, that are set in dark and slippery places, whom the angel of the Lord drives? Now, if ever, the places of God's enemies are very slippery, themselves in the dark, and the angel of God driving them. Therefore they shall fall, and fall assuredly.

And if so, then learn we how to take notice of, and behold these great works of God concerning the fall of Babylon, as they fall out in our generation. It is in regard of the evil that comes to evil men, as in regard of the good that comes to the good. Now when the saints do receive any mercy, their hearts stick not in it, nor their eyes on it, but they see it lying under its relation, in relation to the word and promise, saying, It is indeed a great mercy that I have a house, and place to dwell in; but God hath not only given me sweet habitation, but he hath given it me in the way of a promise, to perform the mercy promised. He hath given me wife, children, and friends, to perform the mercy promised. Nay, he hath given me Christ himself, to perform the mercy promised. Luke i. Thus they see all things lying under a promise in that relation. So also when ye see any judgment befal the enemies of God's church, you are not to look upon them as mere works of God, but to look upon them in their relations, in relation to the threatening, as lying under the threatening, and the fruits of it; and the reason hereof is

this especially, because otherwise you do not see the whole work of God, when you do see it before you. As it is said of Israel, "Yet the Lord hath not given you eyes to see," &c. Deut. xxix. 4.

As now suppose that a fool, a madman, or a beast should come into the congregation, though they should see the water of baptism, yet they would not see the sacrament, or half the sacrament, because they could not see it under its relation. Wherefore, my beloved, whenever you shall behold the hand of God upon the world, in the fall of Babylon, and his great works, that way, be sure that ye behold them under the relation, in relation to the Lord's threatening, and say: True, here is a Babylonish priest crying out, Alas, alas, my living! I have wife and children to maintain, and all is gone, my preferment is gone, my hope is gone, my place and office gone. But all this is to perform the judgment threatened. God threatened before, that he would "put it into the hearts of the princes of the earth, to eat her flesh and drink her blood," Rev. xvii. 16. Now it is in a great measure fulfilled, for her great revenues and rich livings are in part her flesh and blood. God said before, that "her merchants should stand afar off weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city," Rev. xviii. Thus is the word of the Lord fulfilled, and God is faithful.

As the fall of Babylon is very certain, so it is the duty of the saints to speak of it as if it were done already.

We are bound to honour the faithfulness of God, more than the faithfulness of any other, because other things are faithful to us, as Salvian observes, because he is faithful. We expect cooling and cleansing from the water, and that is faithful. Why? For God is faithful, he bids it be faithful to us. We expect warmth and light from the fire, and that is faithful. Why? For God is faithful, he bids it be faithful to us. In all these faithful creatures there is but a drop of God's faithfulness; and when they promise, we believe them: and shall we not believe Him, when he promises and when he threatens? When a faithful friend promises, we say it shall be; but we are to honour God's faithfulness more, and therefore to speak of the thing promised or threatened, as if it were done already.

When we do but begin a good work, God speaks of it as

done already. It is said, "By faith Abraham offered up Isaac," Heb. xi. 17; yet he did not actually offer him up, but intended it, and set himself to do it at God's command. It is said, that "Moses took his wife and son, and returned to the land of Egypt," Exod. iv. 20; yet he was but in the beginning of his return. When we have begun any good work for God, he speaks of it as done altogether. Therefore he having begun that great and good work for the churches, the fall of Babylon, it is our duty also to speak of it as if it were done already.

Let us therefore correct our manner of speaking. If any storm, or trouble arise upon the churches, we are ready to break forth into despondent conclusions, saying, God is now gone, mercy gone, the ordinances gone; we were in good hope to have seen good days, the ruin of the church's enemies; but they do so prevail, as that we have no hope at all in this particular. But though the extremity of the church be never so great, and the enemies never so flourishing, we ought to say, They are fallen, they are fallen.

But how can we speak thus, when an utter improbability and unlikelihood dwells upon the business?

Yes. For when God destroys his enemies, he either takes them away by a weak hand, as Jer. l. 45, "The least of the flock shall draw them out;" or, they shall perish by their own hands, as Ps. ix. 16, "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands;" or, they shall be destroyed without hands, as Job xxxiv. 20, "The mighty shall be taken away without hands." And is this true, may the soul say, that the enemies of the church shall perish by a weak hand, or by their own hand, or without hands; then will I never sink and despair in my heart, or give ill language to God's faithfulness, though the condition of God's churches be never so low, though the condition of the enemies be never so high.

If we are to speak of this work as if it were done already, when it is not done indeed; then how contrary are those to God's word, who say it is not done when it is done indeed: that will not acknowledge God's work, that say on the contrary, It is not fallen, it is not fallen, when it is fallen in truth. And such there shall be, who when the vial is poured upon the seat of the beast, "shall gnaw their tongues, and blaspheme the God of heaven, not repenting of their deeds,"

Rev. xvi. 10, 11. But I hope better things of you, and such as accompany salvation. Only now if there be any here, that have given any assistance to Babylon, by pen, tongue, or hand, let them repent. Oh, every one, repent you of your superstition, repent, repent you, lest you partake with Babylon in all her plagues and torments to all eternity. And remember that speech of Godtesscalchus: I am afraid to deny the truth, lest I be for ever denied by the truth. *Christus est via et veritas, non consuetudo.* Christ is the way and truth, not custom, not innovation. And if there be ever a drunkard, swearer, adulterer, sabbath-breaker, or profane person here, let him labour to get into Christ, lest when he shall see these great works come to pass, and come to pass ye shall see them shortly, with greater works of God than I have mentioned, ye may be able to rejoice in them; whereas otherwise you will say, Aye, these be glorious works indeed, and comfortable for those that are in Christ, but I am a poor wretched drunkard, and not in Christ. Wherefore above all things get into Christ, so shall you rejoice with the felicity of God's chosen.

And if any have had any ill thoughts or words of, or against God's people, now change your words and your thoughts of them, for, for their sakes it is, that these great works are to be done. "Thus saith the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, for your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all the nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships," Isa. xliii. 14.

SERMON XIII.

ON ZECHARIAH I. 18—21, II. 1.

PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS, AT THEIR PUBLIC FAST, NOVEMBER 29, 1643.

"Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked, and they see his shame," Rev. xvi. 15.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE KNIGHTS, CITIZENS AND BURGESSES OF THE COMMONS HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

RIGHT WORTHY SENATORS.—According unto your command I have presented these notes unto your hands and the world's view; give me leave, withal, to present my humble thankfulness for your unwearied labour of love to these three kingdoms, and in them unto all the churches of Christ; for as once the Poles' ambassador said in regard of the Turk, *Per latus Polonicæ petunt Europam*, I may say in regard of your and our enemies, through the sides of England, Scotland and Ireland, they strike at all that is truly called christendom, your wisdom therefore doth well to make good these passages.

It is true, indeed, your work is great, but it is for the great God; and Solomon saith, "The house that I build is great, for great is our God," 2 Chron. ii. 5. Shall not we do great things for him who hath done and suffered great things for us and by us? "Sicut calere contra frigidum hoc est repugnare frigido, virtutis est atque vigoris, sic amareet appetere insuavo sive molestum," &c.—Parisiens de Fide.

Your work is clogged with many difficulties; but if it were not so, how should the strength of your love appear either to your God or to your country? A man may be said to love the truth before the wind of opposition riseth, but he cannot be said to hold it fast, or cleave unto it, till he meets with some that would take it from him, Deut. xiii. 1—4. Difficulty doth commend duty: there was a stone rolled upon Christ's grave, and there is a difficulty rolled upon every truth or way of God which through the evil of the times hath been buried; but when you come to the grave's mouth, the place where you think to meet with most difficulty, there and then the stone shall be rolled away. "Operum difficultates cœlorum suavitates consequuntur." The more difficulty in doing, the more sweetness in the work done.

Your work is berounded with many dangers, but the neglect of it is more dangerous, and the frown of a prince may sometimes stand with the favour of God; "Nec mendacii utilitas est diuturna, nec veritatis damnum diu nocet:" neither shall flattery always hold in credit, nor truth ever continue in disgrace.

Your work is reproached sometimes, and calumniated by divers adversaries: but as Seneca said to his friend, *Male de te loquuntur homines, sed mali;* so may I say to you, Men speak evil of you, but they are evil men, and it may be, yea it is likely God will hear the language of your Peninahs, and make you the more fruitful, especially you doing as Hannah did, who though she was willing to answer to the charge of Eli, because he did speak from zeal, yet she would not an-

swer the reproach of Peninah because she spoke from hatred. "Cur respondet sacerdoti, sed Peninnæ non respondeat Anna? quia Peninna erat persona privata, sacerdos autem publica: item Peninna loquebatur ex odio, sacerdos ex zelo: unde illud negligendum erat, ille instruendus."—Mend. in Sam. Surely malignant clamours are best answered when neglected. *Tutius aliquando agit qui calumnias non exaudet.* Jesus Christ was eclipsed that God's servants might shine.

Your work, also, is or may be disadvantageous unto your own particular interests, your public employments cannot but hinder your private affairs, yet be pleased to remember Moses and Joshua, who were men of great service in their generation, having as full an opportunity to have made themselves rich as ever men had, yet we do not read of any great lot they shared out to themselves or their posterity. You are now employed upon God's service; as for your own private affairs, if you afford them some relics of your love, and so much only as the public leaves, it is enough; for what is too cold for God is hot enough for the world; yet as the baggage unto an army, so are things temporal to spiritual, and personal estates to public employments. "Toleramus potius præsentia quam diligamus."—Augustin.

And in the throng of all your discouragements, be pleased also to remember how good, how honourable, how successful your service is and will be.

It is good, first, in regard of the State; for you are now in travail for your country's liberty, which though it may stick some time in the birth, and a dragon stand before you to devour it before it is born, yet in due time it shall be brought forth, and we shall not only be *liberati*, but *liberi*. The Hebrews have a proverb which they have borrowed of Solomon, פרעגדר ישכנו הנחש, that whoso breaketh down the hedge shall be bitten with serpents. The hedges of the State or Church are the laws, as Drusius interprets it: "Qui diruit maceriam, eum mordebit serpens; qui legum constitutiones impingit, non feret impune; qui religionis sacra violat, non erit a pœna immunis:" or the ordinances thereof. Those enemies of yours or ours, that have or would tread down our hedges even to the ground, shall not ever go unpunished. When the hedge is lowest the serpent is nearest.

Good, again, in regard of the churches; for through your pains and labour of love, those swelling parts, I had almost said wens, which engrossed all the outward nutriment unto themselves, the direful presage of a people's death and ruin, are either taken off or made more proportionable. "Ut videmus in corpore humano (cui apostolus in pluribus epistolarum suarum passibus comparat) quod si nutrimentum luit ad unum membrum, ita ut enormiter ingrossetur et alia nimia attenuatione demacerentur non potest diu vivere: sic in corpora eccles. si superiores fiant ita graves attractione substantiæ quod inferiores vix possunt præ inopia se sustinere, hoc est signum jam propinquæ ruinæ."—Gersom.

Your service is very honourable; for what greater honour than under Jesus Christ to be your country's saviours and your Lord's servants? Upon Moses's death, it was said, Moses, the servant of the Lord, is dead; not Moses, the prince of the people, but the servant of the Lord. So Psalm xviii., in the title of the Psalm, it is said, "A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord;" not, A Psalm of David, the anointed king of Israel, but, as if it were more honour to be God's servant than Israel's king, it is said, the servant of the Lord: such honour have all our worthies.

Your service is and will be most successful; it is truth you stand for; and though the truth may labour, as Hierom speaks, it cannot be overcome: "Veritas laborare potest, vinci non potest." For what, saith Mendoza, is more

impregnable than the heavens? and truth hath built itself a tower there. "Quid enim cœlo inexpugnabilius? veritas arcem in cælo collocavit." Ps. cxix. "Thy word, O Lord, is settled in the heavens," Ps. cxix. Wherefore, worthy Sirs, as heretofore, so now much more be always abounding in the work of the Lord, in due time you shall reap if you faint not. If you want money to carry on your (yet not your, but God's) public design, remember what was promised unto Cyrus, who in regard of rebuilding the temple, was to do your work in the type. "I will go before thee, saith God, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron, and will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places," Isa. xlv. 2, 3. And doth not your own experience tell you, thus, even thus hath our God dealt by us; for the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places have been brought forth unto us; gold and silver that hath not seen the light for many years before. God is the same God still, and his promise, which is your mint, the same.

If you want outward strength and power, then remember how often, when the Jews were to build the temple, and therein to meet with enemies, the Lord inculcates that his attribute upon them, the Lord of Hosts: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts," thrice in one verse, Zech. xv. 3; and five times in four short verses, Hag. ii. "Silver is mine, and gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts; I will fill this house with my glory, saith the Lord of Hosts," &c.

And if you find not the hearts of the people coming up always to your forwardness, then your wisdom knoweth how to improve the beats of their hearts while they last. All things, you know, are easy and beautiful in their season; and because men know not time and judgment, therefore their misery is great upon them.

But, above all things, let your eye be upon that most which God's eye is most upon, truth, reformation, and pure religion. State hypocrites desire truth for peace sake, godly statesmen desire peace for truth's sake; war is for peace, but peace for truth: wherefore that I may serve you herein, I take the boldness to lay these few lines before you.

The sermon calleth for exactness of reformation. If I have not been exact, whilst I have called for exactness, your goodness knoweth as well how to connive at what is mine, as to embrace what is God's. Go on, right worthy patriots, still to defend your country, to contend for truth, to be willing to lose and be lost for Christ. Whilst I live, I shall live praying for you, and when I die, I hope I shall die praising God for you.

Your humble servant in the gospel of Jesus Christ,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

ZECHARIAH I. 18—21, II. 1.

" 18. *Then lift I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.*

" 19. *And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.*

" 20. *And the Lord shewed me four carpenters.*

" 21. *Then said I, What come these to do? and he spake, saying,*

These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the gentiles, which lift up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

" 1. *I lift up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring-line in his hand.*"

ALTHOUGH, according to the English translation, these words are parts of several chapters, yet in many Hebrew copies the iind chapter begins where my text doth, and they have such connection that I may not part them.

Three things there are which this age of ours hath brought forth: malignant enemies; special instruments of their ruin; and great endeavours for reformation. Accordingly here are three visions: a vision of " four horns," verses 18, 19; a vision of " four carpenters," verses 20, 21; a vision of " a man with a measuring-line in his hand," ii. 1.

Every vision hath its narration and explication.

The narration of the first vision is at the 18th verse, " I saw, and behold four horns:" the explication in the 19th verse, " These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." So that

You have the description of the church's enemies under the vision of four horns, who are here described, 1. From their number or multitude; they are four horns according to the four parts of the world: *Quatuor cornua sunt quatuor mundi partes.* 2. From their power and strength: the horn is a word that in scripture phrase doth note strength: " He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us," Luke i. 69; that is, strong and powerful salvation. 3. From their mischievous and malignant practice: " They scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem."

In the second vision you have the description of those special instruments that are raised up for their destruction, under the similitude of four carpenters, or four smiths; who are here described, 1. From their number: four. And, 2. From their work, which is to scatter the horns, and to cast out the gentiles.

Then cometh in the third vision, the endeavours for reformation, under the similitude of " a man with a measuring line in his hand;" which is described two ways: 1. From the instrument thereof, a man, or, as in the Hebrew, איש, an ex-

cellent man, explained to be Zerubbabel their governor, chap. iv. 10. 2. From the exactness thereof; he doth work by line: "I saw a man with a measuring line in his hand."

Give me leave to open the words and draw out some short observations upon them before I come to the main truths.

"Then lift I up mine eyes and saw," verse 18. That is, I stirred and roused up myself with all intenseness to receive this vision. Heavenly revelations are not to be obtained in a drowsy and sleepy way.

"And behold four horns." That is, enemies from all parts of the world, and especially those four monarchies who have all in their course and turn been vexatious to the people of God. It is no new thing for the saints and churches to be pushed, gored, scattered by cruel and beastly enemies. Yea the churches may be so afflicted with enemies, that a man shall not know whither to fly for safety, for in every part of the world there shall be some opposers: "I saw four horns," misery and calamity and persecution arising out of every part.

"And I said to the angel that talked with me," &c., verse 19. This angel by interpreters is said to be Christ himself, the angel of the covenant, who is the best interpreter of heavenly visions and of hard scriptures. When we understand them not, we should search, make inquiry, and go to Christ, saying, as Zechariah here, "What are these, Lord?"

"And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." The enemies of the churches are not said here to have wounded or killed Judah, Israel, or Jerusalem, but ורו *ventilarunt*, they have tossed them up as it were into the air; they have scattered, saith the English. It is the proper work of the enemies of the churches to scatter God's people. The disciples of Christ are commanded to be without horns; "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves;" the word in the Greek is, ακεραιοι, without horns as doves; but here the enemies are said to scatter Judah, Israel and Jerusalem; that is their work and property.

"And the Lord shewed me four carpenters," verse 20. The word is חרשים,* that is, such agents and instruments as do work with art, counsel and deliberation. Though the ene-

* חרש fabricavit.

mies of the churches be unreasonable and cruel as horned beasts, yet the instruments that God raiseth up to suppress them are full of humanity, wisdom and counsel; and they are four, too, a proportionable strength.

"Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are come to fray them away, and to cast out the horns of the gentiles." verse 21. Look how they dealt by God's people, so God will deal by them; they scattered Israel, and the God of Israel will raise up instruments that shall scatter them; they cast out God's people, and they shall be cast out. Scattering enemies shall be scattered themselves at last.

"I lift up mine eyes again." chap. ii. 1. Here is another vision brought to the same purpose, in general, to uphold and comfort the distressed servants of God. When the condition of the saints is low and their fears great, there is need of repeating comforts; then visions, promises and consolations must be oft repeated, "I lift up mine eyes again."

"And I looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand;" that is for to build exactly. Verse 2., tells us it was for to measure Jerusalem, which cannot barely be understood literally, for chap. i. 16., it is said, "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies, saith the Lord, my house shall be built in it, and a line shall he stretched forth upon Jerusalem," &c. which promise in its latitude was never yet fulfilled literally, but it is to be understood of the new Jerusalem especially, mentioned in Rev. xxi. Where we find a man also at this measuring work. So that we may yet say, though the afflictions of the churches be very great, and their desolations many, yet if a man will lift up his eyes and stir up himself, he may and shall behold, "a man with a measuring line in his hand." And thus you see that there is hardly a word of these three visions, but affordeth some special instruction. But because I have not time for all, I shall especially close with those three doctrines, that are especially held in these three visions. Thus,

1. In that here are four horns that appear, you may observe this, That when God intendeth any good and salvation to his churches, he doth first suffer many potent, malicious enemies to rise against them,

2. In that these four carpenters do appear immediately after

these four horns, as it were in the same vision, you may observe, that though God do suffer the enemies of his churches and people to be exceeding strong, many, and most mischievous, yet he will raise up an answerable strength against them; four carpenters against four horns, which shall fray them away, and deal by them as they have done by others.

3. In that the "man with a measuring line," doth immediately follow upon these, you may observe, that when God shall please to raise up special instruments to surprise the church's enemies, then and then especially reformation is to be much endeavoured, which is to be done with exactness, even by line.

1. I begin with the former vision of the four horns, and the first doctrine, namely, that when God intendeth any great good and salvation to his people, he doth first suffer malignant, potent, and many enemies to rise against them. Was it not so with Israel when God intended to bring them out of Egypt? Then their taskmasters arose and doubled their work, and were more inimicitious to them than formerly. Was it not thus with the Jews when God brought them out of Babylon to build the temple? opposition they met withal in their remove, in their journey, and all along in their temple-work. Was it not thus with the Israelites when they went to execute justice upon that malignant tribe of Benjamin for the great sin of Gibeah? If you look into Judges xx., you shall find that before Benjamin was punished they got two great victories upon Israel; Israel, (if you count the number of their soldiers) were twelve to one; Israel had the best cause, and their work was good, they went forth to do justice on that delinquent tribe; yet if you consult the story, the tribe of Benjamain first slew of them down to the ground forty thousand men. This is God's way still; he seldom or never destroyeth his enemies but out of zeal; "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts hath done this," saith the prophet: now zeal is nothing else but angered love; and three things there are in the world that God doth love especially, his people, his truth, and his worship; when the enemies prevail, they spoil his people, they defile his worship, they scorn his truth, so his love is angered, his zeal is stirred, and then his enemies are confounded.

But what reason is there why God should suffer his pre-

cious servants and people to be thus handled, oppressed, gored, scattered by cruel enemies?

Good reason for it. *Totidem inimici, totidem pædagogi:* so many enemies, so many school-masters. "Make plain my way before me (saith the Psalmist) because of mine enemies;" but in the Hebrew it is, "because of mine observers:" our enemies are our observers, and their observation is our preservation.* As a man's best friend sometimes doth him more hurt than his worst enemy, so his worst enemy doth him more good than his best friend. Now suppose, saith Salmeron,† that a man were in great want and need of money, and his friend should throw him a bag of gold, though in his catching of it he might hurt his hands or head, yet when he hath taken out the gold, he loves his friend nevertheless. There is no persecution but brings a bag of gold to God's people; though it may somewhat hurt them in falling upon them, yet when they have picked out the gold thereof, they will love God the more.

Let me instance:

Hereby they are occasioned to honour God, which is the end of their life and the comfort of their soul: for what is honour, but as Aquinas‡ speaks, a testimony of another's excellency? The more I testify of any excellency in any truth or way of God's, the more I honour him; and in times of persecution the saints of God do thus testify of him.

Hereby the children of God are weaned from the world, and made to hie them home to their Father's house.

Hereby they are made more useful in their places, and beneficial unto their enemies; for therefore our enemies do us so much hurt, because we do them no more good.

* שור Inimicus quasi observator dictus, quod semper observet et contempletur quibus malefaciat.—Buxtorf.

† Magna Dei misericordia in flagello temporali: ut si quis crumenam gravem et auro onustam ex edito loco in caput cujusdam pro debito aliquo in carcerem detenti proficeret et dolorem aliquem ei inferret, et tumorem capitis excitaret, et unam vel alterem guttulam sanguinis eliceret, ille quidem rei ignarus moleste ferret in principio, et vicem suam magnopere doleret quod afflicto afflictio adderetur; verum si paulo post animo jam tranquillo ad jaxum oculos suos convertit, et crumenam multo auro refectam deprehendat, quo possit debita sua persolvere et quod superest ad vitam tranquillius placideque traducendam sufficere, profecto de illato tantillo vulnere nulla esset amplius querimonia vel memoria, imo seria congratulatio: Ad eundem modum de Christi flagellis considerandum.—Salmer. de miracul. in Joan. iii.

‡ Honor est testimonium de alicujus excellentia.—Aquinas.

Hereby they carry the truths of God and Christ into other parts; the enemy intendeth to scatter their persons, but God intendeth to scatter his truths.

Hereby the children of God receive a fuller and clearer testimony of their own graces. When the world frowns most, God smiles most upon them. When the enemy gives the loudest testimony of their hypocrisy, God from heaven doth give the highest testimony of their sincerity to their bosoms.

Hereby the enemies themselves are more convinced. Some men snore so loud in their sleep, that they wake themselves with their own snortings; and some men's sins are so loud and unreasonable, that they convince themselves and others by their own unreasonable dealing with the people of God. Master Fox tells of one in queen Mary's time that had so basely and maliciously used that servant of God James Abbes, that when that good man James Abbes was dead, the remembrance of this martyr's patience and his own unreasonableness, made the persecutor cry out and say, James Abbes is saved, and I am damned; and so he went wringing his hands to his grave, crying, James Abbes is saved and I am damned, James Abbes is saved and I am damned. It is recorded also of one Calocerius, that when he saw the malignancy of the enemies, and patience of the martyrs, he cried out and said, Of a truth great is the God of the christians.* And what can a christian desire more? Is not God's truth better than my house?

Hereby also the saints are kept from and cured of divisions among themselves. Cyprian meditating of the several causes that brought those sad and heavy persecutions in the primitive times, reckoneth up this for one, their own divisions, wherefore God was fain to let out the dog upon the sheep, that the sheep might run together. Our punishments oftentimes wear the names of our sins in their foreheads: and if ever, then now; God doth punish our divisions with divisions; but it is to cure our divisions. He points to our sin by our punishment, that in our punishment we may be cured of sin.

Hereby also the servants of God may see and know by experience, that it is better to serve God than men. When

* Vere magnus Deus Christianorum.

we worship God after and for the precepts of men, we do rather worship men than God, and serve them than him; and when his servants do so, then God suffers men to rise up against them, that they may learn in a smarting way, as well as they have done in a sinning way, what it is to serve men.* This cause you have expressed, 2 Chron. xii. 7, 8, "And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out by the hand of Shishak; nevertheless they shall be his servants, that they may know my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."

Hereby again the servants of God learn the right use of the rod, both in church and state: sometimes it so falleth out that justice is not executed in a kingdom, and discipline not exercised in a church; Well then, saith God, seeing that you will not take the rod into your hand, I will take it into mine own, but it shall be in such a manner as shall make all your hearts to ache. In Rev. ii. and iii. you know that there are seven epistles written to the seven churches, and there is none of all the churches but are threatened with one affliction, calamity or another, save only that of Philadelphia, and if you mark it, you shall find that only that church had the keys rightly used and handled. And you shall find this also in all God's dealings both with states and churches: let a state or kingdom be never so wicked, yet if justice be executed there is hope thereof; let a church be never so defiled, yet if discipline be exercised, there is hope of that: but if a kingdom where there is no justice, or a church where there is no discipline, nor *in tendentia* to it, then the Lord himself ariseth and saith, Well, because you will not take this rod into your hand, I will, and I will raise up enemies against you that shall do the same to you, that you should have done to them. Good reason therefore, yea, infinitely good reason, that God should sometimes suffer his own people to be pushed, gored, scattered, by cruel and bloody enemies that are most unreasonable.

Wherefore then let no man be stumbled or offended at

* Qui Deum ideo colit ut aliud magis quam ipsum assequatur, non Deum sed illud colit quod assequi concupiscit.—Augustin.

God's present proceedings in the world, or in this kingdom, though very mysterious. Our Saviour says, "These things I tell ye before, that when they come to pass, ye may not be offended;" and whatsoever is now come to pass among us, Christ hath told us of it before; yea, this Scripture. Yet, good Lord, how many are there that are offended! Oh, says one, we looked for reformation, and we meet with confusion; for light, and we meet with darkness; we looked that Jesus Christ should at this time have restored his kingdom to the churches; for friends, and we meet with enemies; can God love us, and suffer such enemies to rise against us? Were there ever any enemies that were like to ours? so potent, so cruel, so many, so blasphemous, so hellish, &c.

But who art thou, O man, that speakest thus long without book under the command of unbelief, and darkenest knowledge? Shouldst thou not rather write so and such over thy sins, than over thine afflictions? You say, had ever any of God's people such enemies as we; so cruel, so many, so vile, &c.? You should rather say, Come, O my soul, did ever any commit such sins as I do; so frequently, so knowingly, so deliberately, so incorrigibly, so scandalously? Why do not rather write the *so* upon your sins, than upon your sorrows? Thus did Eusebius Nieremburgius, aggravating his own sins, Oh, saith he, never any sinned so as I have done, the devil sinned indeed, but Christ never died for him as he hath done for me; Judas sinned indeed, but he was never pardoned as I have been; Achan sinned indeed and troubled the kingdom, but he had not that light and knowledge as I, nor lived under such means as I have done; oh, never any sinned so as I have done: thus Nierembergius, thus Parisiensis, and thus should you think and say.*

But besides, though your enemies be so great, so many, so cruel, &c., as none of God's people have had before; know you not that this is most agreeable to Scripture? When Satan's time is short, his wrath is great, Rev. xii. The latter times of the world are above all others by the

* Domine Deus meus, quod est malum cujus ego reus non sum, vel perpetrando illud opere, vel volendo illud perpetrare? quod enim est bonum quod in me non extinxi, vel in alio persecutus non sum impediendo ne fieret, vel detrabendo jam facto, vel permittendo extingui, vel gaudendo si extinguebatur in ipso? Domine misericordiæ, quot bona perierunt vel me procurante ut non essent, vel me non juvante ut essent?—Parisiens.

apostle called "the perilous times," Austin observeth that the church from Christ to Christ, from Christ's death to Christ's coming again, should meet with three sorts of persecutions; one by the sword, as in the primitive times; another by heresies, as in the Arian times; the other both by sword and heresies, as in these latter antichristian times.* Luther says well, Cain shall be killing his brother Abel to the end of the world, but he is most bloody in his old days. It is observed to my hand, that the four great monarchies, who have been the constant enemies of the church, are compared by Daniel unto four beasts, a "leopard, a bear, a lion," &c., but the antichristian beast that should arise in the latter times is made up of all these; his feet being the feet of a bear, his mouth the mouth of a lion, himself like a leopard, and the dragon giving his power unto him, Rev. xiii. 2. As if the cruelties of all the monarchies were concentrated and met in him. Of all enemies, you shall observe those are most deadly and cruel that are apostates, that have been once professors, and then prove apostates:† therefore the devil, the Jew, and antichrist are greatest enemies to the saints, because they are all apostates. Now the enemies that are risen up in our days are apostatizing enemies, and therefore if they prevail, which God in mercy forbid, are like to prove the sorest enemies that ever the English sun did see; yea, worse than the enemies of those Marian days; for in queen Mary's time we read that here and there two, three, four, or ten were brought forth to the stake, but should these enemies now prevail, not two, or three, or four, or ten, but three thousands, and four thousands, and ten thousands would be led out together to be all massacred. In queen Mary's time though the parent died, the child did inherit his land; but now at once our lands, our liberties, our children, our religion and we are all like to die together. In queen Mary's days Germany was open, and a place of refuge to God's people, many did fly thither, and were safe in the time of that storm; but now if these enemies prevail,

* Prima ecclesiæ persecutio fuit violenta per mundi principes; secunda fraudulenta per hæreticos; tertia erit violenta et fraudulenta simul, ubi scilicet temporalis et spiritualis potestas in unum convenient adversus Dominum et Christum ejus.—Augustin.

† Solus apostata est persecutor ordinis sui.

whither should God's servants fly? Not to Frankfort, not to the Palatinate, not to Bohemia, not to Ireland, not to Scotland, I had almost said not to our graves, for they will hardly give us grave room in our own country. Oh, the black and dismal day that is like to come upon us, if these horns that are now pushing at us should prevail against us. Well, but remember God's method, your own sins and God's method; his method is, first the horns, and then the carpenters; though the horns may push, and gore, and scatter for a time, yet the carpenters shall fray them away, and cast out these gentiles. And so I come to the second vision of the four carpenters, and the second doctrine, namely,

Secondly, Though God suffer the enemies of his church and people to be exceeding strong, cruel, and very many, yet he will raise up proportionable strength against them, apt and fitted instruments to suppress them, who shall fray them away and deal by them as they have dealt by others. This is in the commission of those who are deputed to destroy Babylon, Rev. xviii. 6. "Reward her even as she hath rewarded you." And to this purpose, I say, God will raise up a suitable and proportionable strength, four carpenters for the four horns. Now the truth of all this will be more fully evidenced, if you consider those names, titles, and attributes wherewith Jesus Christ hath invested himself; titles and attributes directly opposite to all that evil which is any of the church's enemies. Three enemies you know there are by whom you are most molested, the flesh, the devil, the world.

The flesh brings forth three great evils. Ignorance in the understanding; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our Prophet. Rebellion in the will; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our King. Guiltiness that ariseth from ignorance and rebellion; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our Priest.

The devil our second enemy is armed with all weapons of hostility against us; therefore there are several names given to him. He is said to be the *strong man*, ὁ ἰσχυρός, "when the strong man keepeth the house," &c.; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called ἰσχυροτερος αυτου, stronger than he, Luke xi. 22. The devil is called the accuser of the brethren; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our Advocate.

The devil is called Apollyon, destroyer; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our Saviour. The devil is called the old serpent; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called the brasen serpent. The devil is called a roaring lion, in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called "a Lion of the tribe Judah* The devil is called the god of this world, the prince of the air; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called the "Prince of Peace, the mighty God." Thus whatever terms or titles of strength and power there is in Satan, there is somewhat in Jesus Christ that answereth, yea that overanswereth all.

And for our third enemy, the world, you cannot have a more full description of its power than as it is presented to you in Rev. xiii. 1. "I saw a beast arising out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns." Our text speaks but of four horns, and here are ten; yet if you look into Rev. v. you shall find an answerable strength in Christ, who is described to be a Lamb having seven horns, seven rather than ten being the number of perfection in Scripture. But if you think that seven is not enough to equalize the ten, you find also in Habak. iii. 4. that the Lord our God is said to have horns in his hand, because all the works of his hand are done in strength and power. So that whatever your enemies are, there is strength enough in Jesus Christ to subdue their strength.

And why is Christ thus furnished, but for his church and people? He is the Lord-keeper of all our comforts, the Lord-treasurer of all our graces, and the great magazine of all our ammunition.† He was anointed that he might anoint; he was sanctified that he might sanctify; he received of the Father that he might give unto you, unto you I say and unto all the churches. He is the head of his church, and therefore, as Luther‡ observeth well, though every member is sensible of wrong or hurt done to another member, yet the head

* Iste leo ob feritatem, Christus ob fortitudinem Christus leo ad vincendum, diabolus ad nocendum —Augustin.

† Christus communis thesaurus.—Luther.

‡ Sensus subtilitor et velocior est in capite quam in reliquis membris corporis: hoc experientia videmus, nam læso dignitulo aut alia minima corporis parte læsa, statim caput in vultu prodit sese hoc sentire; nasus enim contrahitur, oculi torvum vident: sic Christus caput nostrum afflictiones nostras suas facit et ut in capite omnes sensus, &c.—Luther.

is much more sensible then all the members, for the head is the seat and habitation of all the senses; the hand may touch, but it cannot see; the foot may feel, but it cannot hear or taste; the head sees and feels and hears and tastes, and smells; so, says he, it is with Christ our head, in whom all the senses dwell, and therefore infinitely more sensible of the church's misery then any other member in all the world; and sensible he cannot be unless in due time he be helpful unto them. Upon this very ground you shall find that God promiseth to raise up seven shepherds and eight principal men for the help of his people, Micah v. 5. "When the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men;" As if he should say, though you have been heretofore without guides, and captains, and commanders, and princes, yet when the enemy is come into your land, I will raise up instruments enough to suppress them; and look what these Assyrians have done unto you, that shall my instruments and workmen do unto them; do they come into your country and tread down your palaces; so shall mine instruments go into their country and tread down their palaces, ver. 6. And would you know the ground of all this? It is my love in Christ, for, "thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And ver. 4. "He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide; and this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, ver. 5." So that whosoever doth but seriously consider the strength and anointment of Jesus Christ, must needs conclude this doctrine with me: Though God suffer the enemies of his church and people to be many and great, yet in due time he will raise up a proportionable strength against them to suppress them and to deal by them as they have done by others.

The application of this doctrine looks two ways:

To the saints in general;

To the carpenters in special.

To the saints by way of consolation and encouragement.

To the carpenters, to God's workmen, by way of direction and exhortation.

Here is consolation and encouragement unto all the saints and people of God. Wonder not that in a day of humiliation, I speak of consolation.* Beloved, you are never more fit to mourn for sin, then when you can rejoice in God. One grace makes way for another. It is the warm beams of God's love and care must thaw our hearts. Two things that we are this day to do. To wrestle with God; to fight with our enemies. You cannot in your wrestling take better hold of God then by the skirt of a promise; you cannot fight better against your enemies than by faith. The devil, with whom especially we fight in these wars, will not be killed with swords and knives; "This is our victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith." It is written in the life of Mr. Tyndale, that when he was in the Netherlands, there was a conjurer that could command dishes of meat from several men's tables, so that he would invite his friend to a dish of meat from such or such a prince's table; divers going to see his exploits, Mr. Tyndale went with the rest, if it might be, to hinder it; and when he came there, he set himself in a way of believing to hinder this conjurer's proceedings, which he did accordingly, for when that wretched man should have done his exploit, his hands were held by Mr. Tyndale's faith, and he cried out and said, I cannot do it, there sits the man that hinders me, or to that purpose. What will not faith do, if good? what will it not hinder, if evil? I will not say that in these sad days of ours we have to deal with conjurers, but surely with such persons as through their violence and thefts are able not only to command men's dishes off their tables, but all their goods out of their houses. Oh that we had but faith enough, we might soon believe them out of all their plunderings.†

Wherefore that I may raise up your faith a little and keep you from discouragements, I lay before you this promise; Zechariah's vision is your promise; yea it is somewhat more, for as we say of sacraments, so I say of these two last visions, they are promises unto the eye, unto sense. When Joshua was to bring the children of Israel into Canaan, and

* Sanctus dolet et de dolore gaudet.—Augustin.
† Fides se demittit ad domestica.

so to meet with many enemies, before he went out, God, and Moses, and the people bestowed their several exhortations on him; and if you consult the place, you shall find that all of them, God, Moses, and the people wish him to "be of good courage, and not to fear." Why so? Abulensis answereth, *Rationabiliter enim timere portuit Joshua.** Joshua might rationally fear, for he saw how that his master Moses was occasioned by the Israelites to sin against God, and to be angry, insomuch as he was kept out of Canaan; whereupon Joshua might well think thus with himself, O Lord, if Moses who was the meekest man on earth was moved to anger, the holiest man, a man that saw God face to face, yet could not do this work, but through his failing was denied entrance into Canaan; how shall I be able to lead this people up against all these enemies; well therefore might he fear (saith Abulensis) lest God should give both him and his people into the hands of his enemies. Well, but how then doth God remove these fears, and relieve his heart; only thus, he strengtheneth him with a promise, "Fear not, (says God) neither be dismayed, for I am with thee, and I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." So now, are there any of you oppressed with divers fears because of these horns that are risen up in several parts of the world, of this kingdom? The Lord hath said that according to the number of the horns, the carpenters shall be. Are there enemies in every part; there shall be carpenters in every part. Will you say, Oh but our enemies are exceeding many, and very cruel; so were these mentioned in the text, who (as Sanctius observeth, the words signify) were to do mischief *in quantum potuerunt et in quantum voluerunt*, and as your English hath it, "so that no man did lift up his head." Will you say, Oh but I do not yet see these carpenters at work; but is it not because you do not stir up yourselves; "I lift up mine eyes and saw," saith Zechariah. Will you say, Oh but when I do stir up myself to behold things as they are, I cannot see four for four, a proportionable strength on the church's side raised up against the enemies; well, but yet you may see some strength in every place, wherever there is any opposition made by ene-

* Rationabiliter ergo timere poterat Josua, quod cum ipse fragilior esset facillimo peccare poterat, ita ut deus ipsum et populum in hostilem tradert potestatem.—Tostat. in Josu. cap. i.

mies, some there are in the same place that God hath raised up to resist them. And the text is not, that God will raise up strong gigantic carpenters, but carpenters, four carpenters, some or other that shall do the work of God, though they be never so weak. In that Micah v. where the promise is to raise up "seven shepherds and eight principal men," he saith, ver. 7., "The remnant of Jacob shall be as the dew that waiteth not for the sons of men." Mark that word, "that waiteth not for the sons of men." When Sisera and all his host were discomfited, what were the carpenters; were not Deborah and Jael with her hammer amongst them? and saith the text, "so let all thine enemies perish;" it is not only a prayer, but a prophecy.

It is recorded in the life and death of Melancthon, that when Charles the fifth, and the Pope of Rome threatened the protestants with fire and sword, Luther, Melancthon, and others got together to seek a way for themselves, their little ones, and their substance; and on a certain day after long deliberation, Philip tired out with labour, rose up exceedingly sad and very sorrowful, to go and speak with some that knocked and inquired after him at the gate; in his return to his company he heard in a room as he passed by, the noise of children, as it were pronouncing their catechism; whereupon he put aside the door where they were, and he saw the ministers' wives of the place, praying and praising God with their children; upon this Melancthon returned to his company exceeding cheerful and very joyful. Luther espying his gladsome countenance, said thus to him, Philip, how cometh it to pass that you return so joyful that went out even now so sorrowful? He answered, Let us be of good comfort, for I have seen them that will fight for us and defend us. Luther asked what those stout and brave captains were? Oh, says Melancthon, they are the chaste wives and virtuous children of holy men. It seems that holy man Melancthon thought such carpenters were a great matter in his time. Beloved, you have many such carpenters as these at work for you. But besides these, look into any part of the kingdom, and you shall find that wherever any horn is raised up, there is a carpenter at work also, some or other that God hath unexpectedly raised up to make resistance. Wherefore, then, lift up your heads, oh, all ye people of the Lord, and be not dis-

couraged; what Zechariah saw, you shall find, God's promise is your security, he will raise up four carpenters to the four horns.

Again, This doctrine speaks direction to the carpenters, it tells them what they ought to do, and what is their work. The work of the four carpenters, you see, is not only to fray these horns away, but to cast out the gentiles. Whoever, therefore, you are, whom God hath raised up for this employment, behold your service, up and be doing, and do it fully; "Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently; and withholdeth his hand from shedding of blood:" they are knit together in one verse, Jer. xlviii. 10.

But we are now upon the work of reformation, building the temple; and if a man be a man of blood he is not fit for that service.

Mistake me not, it is not in my intention to call for blood. Oh that in this day of our humiliation and addresses to God, we could so touch the hem of Christ's garment, that England's bloody issue might be staunched! Be as mild as you can, so you be like unto Christ, who was both a lamb and a lion; a lamb in his own cause, a lion in God's. Meekness and justice may well stand together. Moses was the meekest man upon earth, you know, yet when Israel had defiled themselves with idols in the matter of the golden calf, he stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Exod. xxxii. 27, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate through the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." He doth not say, Slay every man his enemy, or every man his countryman, but every man his brother, and his companion, and his neighbour.* And, verse 28, it is said, "The children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men:" yet the Levites had their hand in temple-work more than any other tribe, and Moses had

* Moses totus ex misericordia et justitia compositus, totus ex benignitate et severitate conflatus: nam in monte miseracordiam a Deo postulabat, ver. 32, in campo justitiam exercebat, ver. 27. Quis non miretur tantam pietatem cum tanta severitate conjunctam?—Mendoza in 1 Sam. ii.

Sic amavit eos quibus præfuit, ut pro eis nec sibi parceret et tamen delinquentes sic persecutus est, quos amavit, ut eos etiam Domino parcente prosterneret.—Gregory.

the honour to build the tabernacle. You read also, in Zech. xiii. of a great and glorious reformation, so high, so great and so convincing, that the very priests who were wont to go in rough garments to deceive the people, should throw away their priest's coats, and say, verse 5, "I am no prophet, I am an husbandman, for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth." As if they should say severally, Though I am able to read a chapter, yet I am not fit to be a minister, I have no learning, but in truth am more fit to go to the plough. Well but now mark, I pray, how this great change and reformation is ushered in and brought about, not without some kind of holy violence, for it is said, verse 2, "It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall be no more remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land: and (verse 3) it shall come to pass that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth." And, verse 6, when any should ask him, "What are those wounds in thy hands? then he shall answer, Those wherewith I was wounded in the house of my friends." Another notable scripture you have for this purpose in Psalm xxiv., when the question is made at verse 3, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place?" that is, Who is fit to be a member of a true church? answer is made to this at verses 4, 5, 6: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart," &c. Wherefore then saith the psalmist, "Lift up your heads, oh, ye gates;" that is, magistrates that sit in the gates: "and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;" that is, of the churches, for the doors of the churches are everlasting doors, against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail:" and then, "the King of glory shall come in;" that is, God will come in and dwell amongst you in his great glory, and your very congregations shall be filled with glory. But, "Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty (saith the psalmist), the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory:" that is, thus will he bring his glory into the churches, by shewing himself to be "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Wherefore, then, "lift up your heads, oh, ye gates," and execute you justice and judgment,

" and be you lift up, ye everlasting doors " of the churches, and be you reformed, and " the King of glory shall come in " with his glory into your congregations. But if you ask me who this King of glory is? I must tell you he is the Lord of hosts, and so he will be known unto you when he bringeth his glory amongst you, " even the Lord strong and mighty in battle." Wherefore I say, lift up your heads, oh, you carpenters and servants of the Lord, drawn forth to that employment; you see your work, the text hath cut it out, I beseech you in the Lord Christ, do it, and do it thoroughly, only let me lay in one caution, which is this:

When you have frayed away the horns, and cast out the gentiles, take heed that the spirit of the horns do not live in the carpenters. When the children of Israel drove the Canaanites out of their land, they did as well inherit their sins as their lands; the sins they came to punish they did commit, the spirit of the Canaanites did dwell in the Israelites. So it was with Jehu when he had beat down the house of Ahab. So with Amaziah, who when he had destroyed the Edomites, he brought the gods of the children of Seir and set them up to be his gods, 2 Chron. xxv. 14, 15. This is too common in times of reformation. You all know what a blessed instrument of reformation Master Calvin was in his time, yet when he came to that matter of denying the Lord's supper to Bartlerius and other Servetians, who were most unworthy, those that otherwise were called protestants rose up in opposition to him, insomuch that he was ready if not altogether forced to leave Geneva for a time.* And was it not thus in that unhappy difference at Frankfort?† In Queen Mary's time you know that many left this their own country and did fly to Germany; when they came there, did not many of them that fled for religion prove pushing, goring horns unto their brethren? Yea, some of them were so bitter to others, that they

* At ego, inquit Calvinus, Chrysostomum sequuntus, occidi me potius patiar, quam hæc manus Dei contemptoribus judicatis sancta Domini porrigat.

A prandio vero Calvinus locum illum insignem Actorum Apost. forte tractans in quo Paulus ecclesiæ Ephesinæ, testatus se eum non esse qui adversus magistratum pugnare sciret aut doceret, cœtumque; multis verbis cohortatus ut in ea quam audivisset doctrina perseveraret, tandem veluti postremam concionem Genevæ habiturus, et quemadmodum, inquit, se res habent liceat mihi quoque fratres apud vos hæc apostoli verba usurpare, commendo vos Deo et sermoni gratiæ ejus.—Mel. Adam. de vita Calvini.

† Histoire de Frankfort.

complained of and impeached that reverend man Master Knox of high treason against imperial dignity, insomuch that he was banished from the city and driven from his congregation. Oh, what a sad thing is this, that the spirit of papists should live in protestants; that the spirit of the horns should live in the carpenters; that the spirit of prelates should live in those that are risen up to fray them away and cast them out! I say no more, but when we have done all, cast out the gentiles and frayed away the horns; if then we shall turn and gore and cast out our brethren and one another, God will find it out, and will not put it up at England's hands. Wherefore, my beloved, in the fear of God let us all remember this caution: oh, take heed that the spirit of the horns do not dwell in the carpenters. And so I come to the third vision, "A man with a measuring-line in his hand," and the third doctrine, which is this:

When God shall raise up his carpenters against his church's enemies, then, and then especially, reformation is to be laid unto the line. You see how these three visions are knit together, one following immediately upon another, shewing not the coherence of the words only, but of the matter. The doctrine therefore falleth asunder into two propositions:

1. Stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness.

2. When God raiseth up his carpenters against his church's enemies, then, and then especially, this exact reformation is to be much endeavoured.

1. Stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness. Temple-work is a great work and of great consequence. When the matter that a man is to work upon is precious, the eye curious and exact that he is to work unto, and the work itself of infinite consequence, there exactness is much required, especially when a miscarriage can hardly be mended but with much difficulty. Now so it is in the work of reformation: the matter to be wrought upon are the souls of men and women, the most precious matter in the world; the eye that we are to work unto is God's, is Christ's, who walketh between the golden candlesticks; and the business itself is of infinite consequence, yours and mine and thousands' eternities lying at the stake; and if there be a miscarriage, it will be a hard thing to bring the whole nation unto the work

again. You see that when a man walketh upon the rope, he carrieth a pole in his hand to sway him, and he looks diligently to his feet, *quia non licei bis peccare*, because if he do fail he cannot mend his miscarriage. And I say, that in this work of reformation, if there be the least slip, it will be a hard thing to recover it, when once a nation is settled in that miscarriage. Surely therefore the work is to be done with the most exactness.

It is only exactness that doth cause conviction in those that do behold. There is no national reformation, but the eyes of nations are upon it. Give me leave to tell you what I have read in a letter written from a learned professor of divinity in an university beyond the seas, who writes thus to England:* Upon your reformation, saith he, if happily performed, doth depend the reformation of all the churches in christendom, as upon a rule and exemplar. So that I say, there is no reformation on foot in any nation, but the eyes of other nations are upon it. If it be done exactly, the beholding nations will also come in and say, We will take hold of your skirt, and your God shall be our God. When Judah shineth, and God's glory resteth upon them, then nations come in and join themselves unto them, Isa. lx. 1, 2, 3. It is only beauty that doth take the eye; when there is no beauty, there is no allurement; καλος, beautiful, comes from καλειν, which signifies to call, because beauty calls forth the eye and holds it in its beams. Now four things must concur to beauty. There must be all the parts; all in their proportion; all in their due place; all laid over with a sweet and lively colour. So it is in the beauty of God's house; there must be all the ordinances; all in their place; all in due proportion; and laid over with the power of godliness. When these meet in any church, there is beauty; but meet they cannot, unless there be exactness in reforming. Surely therefore stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness.

2. But what reason is there of the second proposition, which is, that then this exact reformation is especially to be endeavoured, when God shall raise up his carpenters against

* A vestra reformatione, siquidem fæliciter peracta, pendebit reformatio omnium aliarum ecclesiarum in christianismo, tanquam a norma et exemplari.—D. Voet.

the church's enemies? for when the carpenters do arise the times are troublous.

True, they are indeed; but God chooseth troublous times to build in both his house and walls of the city. The churches have always lost most in times of peace, and gained most in times of trouble.* Whilst the ten persecutions continued, the integrity of the churches was best preserved. The psalmist saith, "Send out thy light and thy truth, O Lord, and let them lead me unto thine altar," Psalm xliii. 4. There is no going unto God's altar with worship, without the leading hand of truth; and there is no building God's house for an altar without light. When God made the world, he first made light on the first day, as an example unto us in all our works to work by light. Now light and truth do break forth much in troublous times.

Troublous times are praying times, and praying times are knowing times. "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God," Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5.

In troublous times men's hearts are most low and humbled, and so more apt and ready to receive and to be led into any truth. You read in Isa. xi., that God promiseth that in the latter times "the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord;" and in the verses a little before, it is said of the lion and the young lion, "that a child shall lead them:" these two go well together; but the stout lion-like spirit will never be led by the hand of a sucking child, until it be brought down and low by troublous times.

In troublous times God is pleased to communicate himself more freely to his people. God is not unto his in affliction as at other times; he is most sweet when the world is most bitter. It is with a nation, church and people, in their reformation, as with a person in his first conversion: because of those many temptations that a converting person is to conflict withal, God doth more abundantly reveal and communicate himself unto him at his first conversion; so with a reforming people, because of those many oppositions that they shall

* Ecclesia tunc semper fuit optima quando agebat inter pessimos.—Luther.

meet withal in that work, God doth then more than ordinarily communicate himself unto them. Thus troublous times do bring forth light and truth. God loveth to have a sacrifice from the hands of the children of Abraham out of the thickets and briars. Opposition commendeth reformation: in troublous times there is much opposition, and therefore in those times reformation is very beautiful. The doctrine is clear then, the application easy. Thus:

Hence we may all see and know what is the work of the times, even to measure the temple. Now for a long while we have had experience of the first vision, and we have felt the horns; the rising of the carpenters we have seen also; and who may not say, "I have lifted up mine eyes, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand?" Blessed be God that we have lived to see this day, to see a man stand with a measuring line in his hand in England. And whoever you are that hear me this day, you are either such as have this measuring line in your hand, or else such as are to be measured.

If you have the measuring line in your hands, then remember this doctrine, the first proposition: stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness. Herein, if you be exact, you shall be like unto Jesus Christ, who, as Salmeron observeth,* when he came to purge the temple, did not only admonish, chide, reprove the money-changers, or whip them away, but did overthrow their very tables, *ne impium opus facile repeterent*, lest they should recover their trade again. In other things you are very exact: men are exact in their trades, exact in their accounts, exact in their reckonings, exact in their diet, exact in their sleep, exact in their hair both of head and face; in small things you are exact, and will you not be exact in this greatest? You know what other reformed churches have done; the reformation of all other churches are round about you, you have their writings before you, their books, their practices, their examples, and this for many years: can you think that God hath set us now for an hundred years upon their shoulders, to see no further into reformation than they have done? If two men be to do the same work, the one first and the other after; he

* Sacerdotes in templo offendentes sunt flagellorum dignissimi.—Salmeron in Joan. 3.

that doth it first, though he doth it never so well, yet will excuse himself and say, I never saw the work done before me, I was fain to invent my very tools and instruments; and you will excuse him though there be some failing in him: but when the second man cometh to the same work that hath a former example, and all his tools to help him, you expect more exactness from him. You know my meaning, I need not apply this; oh, that our God would make England the praise of the whole earth; nothing will do it but our exactness in reformation. Certainly this reformation that is now on foot, hath, as I may speak with reverence, cost our God very dear, the liberties, the estates, the lives and blood of many of his dear children, "of whom the world was not worthy." Do you think God will lay out all this for an imperfect, unexact, poor and low reformation? Let me present you with the prophecy of Bishop Hooper, who when he was in prison called his printer to him, and said, You shall outlive these Marian times, and see the alteration of the present religion, when the gospel shall be freely preached; wherefore remember me to my brethren, as well in exile as others, and bid them be circumspect in displacing of popish priests, and put good ministers in churches, or else their end will be worse than ours. He said, be circumspect; I say, be exact: and though I do not wish that every morning there might be a boy crying at your doors, as once at Philip's, *Mortalis es*, Thou art mortal, thou art mortal; for that the drum doth sufficiently every morning; yet I could wish that this sentence might be sounding in your hearts every morning and night, that it might lie down with you and rise with you: Stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness.

But how shall that be?

Thus: be sure of this that you take the right *line* into your hands. God's word it is our *line*, able to reach unto all particular affairs of the churches.

Mistake me not, I pray. A church is considered two ways; as a meeting of people, men and women; or as a church meeting, a meeting of saints, apparent believers, *cœtus fidelium*. I do not say that the word is to be the only line and rule to the church in the first respect, so reason may be a rule to men as men; but in the second respect it is, the word is able to reach unto all things belonging unto a church

as a church. Our commission is not larger now than the apostles' commission was, and their commission ran thus: "Go teach and baptize, &c., teaching men to observe whatever I command you," Matt. xxviii. If not commanded by Christ, then not to be preached by them nor by us. Jesus Christ was and is as fully Christ in his prophetical as priestly office, and his priestly satisfaction reached unto all our sins, though they were never so small, therefore his prophetical direction reacheth to all our duties, though they be never so little. That which cometh not from heaven, can never bring you into heaven. If you say, There are some things indifferent; it is true, but Christ's command is to keep them so then, and not to alter them.* If you say that circumstances are left unto the church; either you mean all circumstances, or some; if you mean only some, then you conclude nothing, for a particular proposition cannot make a general conclusion; if you mean that all circumstances are left unto the church, then you do at once and at one stroke cut off three commandments from the decalogue; the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me," commandeth the substance of worship, the second the means, the third the manner, the fourth the time; and means, manner, and time are circumstances. Herein Luther speaks well,† Whatsoever a man believeth, or learneth, or teacheth besides the word, it is sin; and again, saith he,‡ The church is the daughter of Scripture, brought up at the feet of the word. Oh, the perfection of that line, it is a complete line, a glorious line, a blessed line. Take this line therefore first into your hands.

* Cum Moses per incultam et desertam regionem populum exulem et vagum traduceret, in tanta olitudine quicquid vel dicendeum vel agendum esset, semper consuluit Dominum, nihil unquam attulit de suo; prophetæ semper aiunt, verbum Domini, visio Domini, vox Domini, hæc dicit Dominus, audite Dominum; Ego (inquit Paulus) evangelium meum non accepi ab homine, neque per hominem; imo Christus omnia inquit quæ audivi a Patre meo tradidi vobis, et prædicate inquit non quicquid inciderit, sed evangelium omni creaturæ.—Jewel in Concione ad Clerum de verb. Dei, page 55, 56,&c.

† Circumst. cur, quomodo, quando, quibus auxilius. Quicquid vivitur, docetur, discitur extra verbum, peccatum est. Ecclesia est Scripturæ filia.—Luther.

‡ Non enim nostro judicio instituenda est religio, sed e verbo Dei. Omnia pervertuntur, cum religio non verbo Dei, sed hominum arbitrio nititur.—Jewel, Concio ad Clerum de verbo Dei.

When you have gotten this line into your hand, view your ground well, and stones well, that you are to draw this *line* over. Three sorts there are that are especially to be lined by it: the magistrates, the ministers, the congregations. These three the Pope and prelates, notwithstanding their flattering with princes, have especially laboured to degrade and to deprive of that power which was given unto them by Jesus Christ. The magistrates, and therefore the "man of sin" is so described by the apostle, that he "shall exalt himself above all that is called God," 1 Thess. ii. 4. The ministers and elders of the church, and therefore you shall observe that from Rev. vii. to xiv. there is no more mention made of elders, unless it be in relation unto that same time. In chap. iv. the condition of the church is stated, and then the elders are mentioned; so again in the vth and viith, but in the after chapters to the xivth you have the story of antichrist, his rise, his reign, and ruin; and till the fall of antichrist, which is begun in the xivth and perfected in the xviiith, we read no more of the elders; but in the beginning of the xixth, after Babylon is fallen, then come forth the elders again, praising God, and with great joy. So in our service-book, the collect runs thus, "Send down upon our bishops and curates," &c., as if ministers and elders were only bishops' curates, and had no power but under them. The congregations also have been much oppressed by them, therefore Azorius * the Jesuit professeth ingenuously, that until Gregory the first, and Charles the great, the congregations had the power of choosing their own ministers; since antichrist's power the congregations have lost their power.

Now beloved in the Lord, there is none of all these three but have some power about church affairs; the magistrate he hath his power, and therefore he is called "a nursing father;" the minister and elder, he hath his power, therefore he is commanded ποιμαινειν, which signifieth both to feed and

* Non itaque; inficiamur veterem ritum ac morem episcopos eligendi, quo plebe præsento, imo et ipsius suffragis aliquando eligebantur: nam in Africa illum morem observatum esse constat ex electione Eradii successoris S. Augustin in Græcia ætate S. Chrysostum ex libro ejus 3. de sacerdote: qua quidem eligendi Episcopi ratio usque; ad Gregorium I. ut constat ex ejus epistolis, imo et ad Caroli Magni, et Ludovici II. Imperatorum usque; tempora perduravit.—Azor. instit. Morab. p. 2. l. 3. c. 28.

rule; the congregation hath its power, and therefore well saith that blessed and learned man Dr. Whitaker,* who is now in heaven: If you consider the government of the church in regard of its Head, Christ, so it is monarchical; if in regard of the elders, so it is aristocratical; if in regard of the people who have a power to choose their own officers, it is democratical: whether this power of theirs be a matter of privilege or of jurisdiction, I dispute not now; but a power they have: a power the people, a power the minister and elder, a power the magistrate; and if your line can be so drawn, as that every one of these three may have that native power which Jesus Christ hath left them by legacy, then have you drawn your line aright: view therefore your ground well.

Which that you may do, in the next place take heed of self-engagements and self-respects in this work of reformation. *Veritas stat in aperto campo*, the truth stands in the open field, it sees no house, it sees no friend, no home; and if your eye be upon your engagements, your hand will draw the line awry. Chrysostom observeth, that when our Saviour propounded the parable of the husbandmen unto the scribes and pharisees, saying, "What shall be done to these husbandmen?" Matt. xxi. 41., the Jews answered, "He shall miserably destroy those husbandmen;" Luke xx. 16, yet in another gospel when our Saviour saith, "he shall miserably destroy them," the Jews answered, "God forbid." In one gospel their answer is related to be, "He shall miserably destroy them;" in the other gospel their answer is related on the contrary, "God forbid." How can these agree? Yes, says Chrysostom, for first they say, "he will miserably destroy these husbandmen;" but when they perceived Christ

* Ergo si velimus Christum ipsam respicere, fuit semper ecclesiæ regimen monarchicum; si ecclesiæ presbyteros qui in doctrina et disciplina suas partes agebant, aristocraticum: si totum corpus ecclesiæ quatenus in electione episcoporum et presbyteros suffragia ferebat ita tamen ut εν τοξια semper a presbyteris servaretur, democraticum: sic partim monarchicum, partim aristocraticum, partim democraticum est semperque fuit ecclesiæ regimen; non quod unus aliquis episcopus potuit pro suo arbitratu singula facere, sed quod Christus summus ecclesiæ suæ monarcha episcopum quemque suo loco constituit, qui cum consilio pastorum, seniorum, et populi ecclesiam quoque suam regeret: hanc fuisse ecclesiæ apostolicæ πολιτειαν ex scripturis discimus, eamque longo tempore conservatum in ecclesiis fuisse historiæ ecclesiasticæ tetantur.—Whitaker controvers. iv. de Rom. Pontif. q. i. c. i.

that aimed at them, then they said, "God forbid." So misleading are all self-respects and engagements in receiving the truth; reforming persons therefore must be self-denying persons.

They must deny their own wits, understandings, reasonings, though they be never so plausible: *Da mihi baptizatam rationem;* Give me baptized reason, saith one, mortified reason. Natural reason may be a drawer of water unto the temple but no officer in the temple.

They must deny their own wills and affections though they be never so strong. The saints in heaven are the least proprietaries to their own wills, and yet most happy. Our Saviour says, "I am not come to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me;" and this must be the resolution and practice of all those that are sent by God upon any service.*

They must deny their own labours though they be never so great. So did Paul, who though "he laboured more abundantly than all," yet says, "I am the least of all the apostles." I have read or heard a story of one being in the boat where the king's crown was, and the crown falling accidentally into the water, he leaped after it, and having recovered it, to save himself and it, he put the crown upon his own head, that so he might swim the better unto the boat or land; but though he was thanked for his venture, yet he was sharply reproved for his boldness for putting the crown upon his own head. The case is ours, is yours, the crown of the Lord Jesus hath as it were fallen into the water, and been ready to sink; it is our duty and practice to venture for to save it, but you must not then set the crown upon the head of your own labours, but upon Christ himself. "The four and twenty elders threw down their crowns at the feet of Christ," Rev. iv. 10.

They must deny their own enjoyments, comforts and contentments, though they be never so sweet. So Nehemiah denied his court favours, his governor's table, and sometimes to shift his own clothes: he that will lift up one that is fallen must stoop himself.†

They must deny their own relations, though they be never so near. Salmeron observeth that our Saviour Christ did still

* Quia voluntati propria non divinæ obedit, sibi parit ruinam.—Mendoza.

† Nullus jacentem excitabit nisi in flexione sui.—Augustin.

call his mother, woman: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" not mother, but woman. Why so, says he, but to shew that in matter of religion we are to know no relations.* Thus must all reforming persons be self-denying persons. And thus, right worthy Zerubbabels, if you do first take the right line into your hands, then view your ground well, giving unto every one those immunities that Christ hath left him, and deny yourselves in working, your own reasons, wisdoms and understandings, your own affections, your own labours, your own outward contentments and all relations, I make no question but our stones of reformation shall be laid with much exactness, and the Lord's blessing; and the Lord grant it may be so.

As for these that are to measured, let them be willing to be measured, to be reformed, exactly reformed, willing to be fully measured. Wonder not that I call upon you to be willing; I shall tell you what I read concerning Beza, who coming unto a disputation before the court of France, and being very mighty in his arguments against the adversary, a cardinal stood up and said unto some peers, I would to God that either Beza were dumb, or that we were all deaf; so unwilling were they to receive the truth and to be reformed by it. And if people did not in their hearts wish as much now, why should they say in every place, Would to God we had never meddled with this work of reformation; here is ado about reformation and exact reformation, see what it has come to, would to God that we had stayed in our old condition. Oh, my beloved, do you not remember Christ's complaint? "I came unto my own, and my own received me not." Shall Jesus Christ take up the like complaint and say, I came unto my own in England and they received me not; I offered, I tendered my own government unto them, and they would none of it? O England, England, how long have I stood knocking at thy door, and as it were put my finger in at the hole of the door by my providential works: wilt thou not yet open unto me? How often would I have gathered thee under my wings as a hen gathereth her chickens, and thou wouldest not; wherefore now thy house is left unto thee desolate. Oh that people therefore would be willing! yea, go to God and say, Behold,

* In causa religionis consanguineos non esse audiendos nec respiciendos.—Salmeron.

Lord, we are all here before thee, do with us what is good in thine eyes, only measure us; measure my family, measure my children, measure my servants, measure myself, only let the line of reformation pass over me and mine; I am willing, Lord, help my unwillingness.

Then, again, if ever God shall please to bring you unto the haven of your desires, reformation in exactness, Christ in his own government into your congregations, be sure that you lay fast hold of him, that he may never leave you or go from you any more. When the spouse in the Canticles had lost Christ, she goes bemoaning, lamenting, crying and inquiring after him; when she had found him, she brings him into the chamber of her mother, and says, "I charge you, oh, ye daughters of Jerusalem, I charge ye by the roes and by the hinds, that ye awake not my Beloved until he please." So do you; if ever you light on Jesus Christ again, a settled gospel, carry him, oh, carry him into the chamber of your mother, as it were, and say unto all your friends, neighbours and congregations, I charge ye, oh, ye daughters of England, yea by the roes and hinds of the field, I charge ye, oh, ye daughters of England, that ye awake not my Beloved until he please. This do hereafter, and for the present engage yourselves thereunto.

In the mean while, that you may do and have all this, now pray, pray alone and pray in company, pray in public, pray in private. The "man with a measuring-line in his hand," says, Pray; your carpenters that are abroad in the field, say, Pray; the examples of all reformed churches, say, Pray; your parliament, say, Pray; your assembly, say, Pray; your lives, your liberties, your gospel, your all, say, Pray: oh, you that have any credit in heaven, pray now; you that never prayed before, pray now. It is but one hour and the work is done. Can ye not watch with Jesus Christ one hour? "Watch and pray." And that I say unto one I say unto all, and unto my own soul, Let us all watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.

SERMON XV.

THE SAINTS' HIDING-PLACE IN THE TIME OF GOD'S ANGER.

PRESENTED TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF LORDS, IN THE ABBEY CHURCH AT WESTMINSTER, OCT. 28, 1646, THE SOLEMN DAY OF THEIR MONTHLY FAST.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,—According to your command I have published these notes, which I humbly present to your lordships. They were once in your ear, they are now in your eye, the Lord ever keep them in your hearts. They lead to hiding love in the day of God's anger, and tell your honours where his hiding places are: and though it is better to have no storms than the best harbour; yet if it shall please God that we must put to sea again, which mercy prevent, it is good to be acquainted with a good harbour. They call for righteousness. The first part of true righteousness, is to deny our own righteousness and to seek Christ's. As, "prima pars salutis est nullam videre salutem." The second part is to acknowledge and contend for the truth, the word of righteousness. Solomon bids us "buy the truth," but doth not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be never so dear. "Multi amant veritatem lucentem oderunt redarguentum," Aquin. ex Augustino. We should love it both shining and scorching.

And another part, is to deal justly, and to set this land free from oppressions. "Blessed art thou land (saith Solomon), where thy king is the son of nobles," Eccles. x. 17. The Septuagint reads it, ἐλευθέρων, the son of free-man. Righteousness doth not only strengthen, but nobilitate a nation and enrich it. When the officers are peace, and exactors are righteousness, then the gold and silver abounds. Isa. lv. 17.

The work of righteousness seems to be divine work, as authority itself is a beam of divine majesty: for as the sun is said to be God's peculiar, "He maketh his sun to rise," &c.; and the wind is called his, "He causeth his wind to blow," Ps. cxlvii. 18; so is righteousness also in a special manner called his, "Give thy judgments unto the king, and thy righteousness unto the king's son," Ps. lxxii. 1. "Da judicia tua et justitiam tuam, Ps. lxxii. 1, habet mundus sua judicia et suam justitiam verum ita ut quod vere justum est, magis opprimatur quam promoveatur; ergo dicit Psal. da id est da illis hanc gratiam ut quod apud te justum est judicent. Quæ ut recto judicent principes et justitiam exerceant est donum Dei," Musculus. And if God lead your lordships into his own work, he will accompany you with his own strength. You cannot better consult honour unto your own families, and happiness unto this nation, than by causing justice and judgment to run down like mighty streams into all the countries thereof.

They call for meekness and sweetness of disposition: which being gained, you shall not need to leave your place if the spirit of the ruler rise up against you; "for yielding (saith the English, but according to the Hebrew and Montanus's translation, lenity or sweetness,) pacifieth great offences." Eccles. x. 4, מרפא, sanitas auferitas, Ar. Montan. None pretend more to good nature than our

gentry, and indeed I think it is a flower grows much in their gardens: but though divine nature will bring us to heaven, meek, good nature will not. It is gospel love and meekness which this sermon means. The gospel works it, and it honours the gospel, The more the gospel conquers this nation, the more love and meekness, which is so wanting, will abound. Oh, spread the gospel, and by your means let us see the angel flying in the midst of our heavens, with the everlasting gospel in his hand. Rev. xiv. 6. This is a work worthy of you. Great men should do great things, and count themselves little. "Vere magnum est magna facere et teipsum putare nihil," Euseb. Nier.

My lords, Christ hath done much for you, you must do much for Christ. The more you have in this world, the more grace it is to be of another. For outward things, afford them some relics of your love, and so much only as better things leave; for what is too cold for God, is hot enough for these things. "Toleremus potius præsentia quam deligamus." Why should not we give that unto God by an act of our faith, which he hath given unto us as a fruit of his love? Thus shall you be able to say in your lying down, as Christ spake at his death: "Father, I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, and now glorify me with thine own self," John xvii. 4, 5. Which that your Honours may do, shall be the prayer of

Your humble and most unworthy servant in the gospel of Jesus Christ,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."—ZEPH. II. 3.

GOD never lets off his murdering pieces upon a nation or kingdom, but he doth first discharge his warning pieces; he never strikes, but he doth threaten first. For as he doth therefore strike once, that he may not strike again; so he doth therefore threaten at the first, that he may not strike at all. He promises that he may fulfil, but he threatens that he may not fulfil.

Having therefore denounced great judgments in the first chapter, he proceedeth by the prophet Zephaniah to soft and sweet exhortations in the beginning of this second.

And because men are either godly or ungodly, he begins with the ungodly, and exhorteth them to gather themselves, &c. ver. 1, 2. And for the godly, he exhorteth them for to seek the Lord, ver. 3, "Seek ye the Lord," &c.

In which words three things are most considerable:

First, The matter of the exhortation, which is, "To seek the Lord, to seek righteousness, and to seek meekness."

Secondly, The subject or persons upon whom this exhortation falls; that is, "the meek of the earth," further described to have wrought judgment.

Thirdly, The motive pressing thereunto, "It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

For explication:

"Seek ye the Lord." That is, the Lord himself, his face, his favour, his honour. The word "seek," is used in Scripture, either more largely, for our whole service of God and endeavours after him; or else more strictly for prayer. Here it is taken in the largest sense, because the word in the Hebrew is not שאל, which signifies rather *verbo quærere*, Prov. xv. 14, to seek by word or petition; but בקש, which signifies rather *conatu quærere*, to seek by endeavour.*

"The meek of the earth." The Hebrew word turned meek, signifies afflicted as well as meek, and so it is often translated, for afflictions well used are means to meeken us, and to file off the roughness and ruggedness off our disposition. But here it doth note the grace and virtue of meekness, which is *irarum moderativa*, that scripture grace whereby a man hath the command and moderation of his anger, leaving all his revenge unto God himself; for it is the same word that is used after for meekness, which cannot be understood of affliction, but of the grace and virtue of meekness, for that no man is to seek affliction.

"Which have wrought his judgment." The word משפט judgment is used in Scripture, either for the commandments, word and statutes of the Lord, or for that evil which God doth bring upon a people in a way of justice; in both these respects the meek may be said to work his judgments, either as obedient to the Lord's word, or as executioners of justice; but I take it rather in the first sense.

"Seek righteousness." That is, the righteousness of Christ, just and righteous dealing between man and man: and the truth of God which is called the word of righteousness; none more fit to seek justice and righteousness, than those that are the meek of the earth.

"Seek meekness." Yea, though they were meek before. When God calls upon wicked men, to love and seek him, as Estius observes,* he wills them to do that which they did

* בקש est quærere magis conatu et studio quam interrogatione aut petitione quod per שאר significatur, i. e. petere seu rogare et si interim confundatur.—Mercer. Pagni. in Thes.

* Quæritur quo re hæc non sit supervacanea prophetæ exhortatio, cum eo ipso

not before: when he calls upon godly men to love and seek him, he wills them to do that more which they had done before. It is not enough to be habitually godly, but whatever grace we have in the habit, must be drawn forth into exercise, and though we have wrought judgment, we must do it again.

We must not think to exercise one grace alone, but there must be an harmony, mixture, conjuncture of all graces. Some are wise, but not zealous; some zealous, but not wise: some just, but not meek; some meek and sweet dispositioned, but not righteous in execution of justice. But these graces must be mixed together; and therefore saith the Lord here, "Seek righteousness, seek meekness."

"It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Ye shall surely be hidden from the wrath to come, and it may be from the wrath present. This *may be*,* says Junius, is not a word of doubting, but provoking to more endeavour: it is a half promise.

From all which words ye may observe these five notes.

First, that God hath his days of anger, there is wrath and anger with God, which upon occasion breaks forth upon the children of men.

Secondly, that in these days of anger, God is very willing for to hide, save, and defend his own people.

Thirdly, though he be willing to hide his own children in evil times, yet he doth sometimes leave them at great uncertainties.

Fourthly, when God's anger doth break forth upon the children of men, and his people at uncertainties, not knowing what will become of them; then and then especially it is their duty to seek the Lord, to seek righteousness, and to seek meekness.

Fifthly, that if any men can do any good in the evil day, it is the meek of the earth.

First, God hath his days of anger, there is wrath and anger with God.

Take anger properly for a passion, and so there is none

mansueti sunt, Dominum jam antea quæsierint? Resp. Quando impiis discitur diligite Dominum monentur facere id quod antea non faciebant; quando autem rectaicorde discitur, diligite Dominum monentur amplius et diligentus facere quod antea faciebant, ita cum dicitur malis et duris quærite Dominum, &c. Estius in locum.

* יִלּוֹא Non dubitantis est sed sollicitudinem exacueniis. Jun. in Exod. xxxii.

with God: *ira* we say is from *ire*, because when one is angry he goes out of himself; and when he is pacified, he does *redire ad seipsum* return to himself. Thus it is not in God: Fury is not in me, saith the Lord.

If ye take anger for the effects and fruits thereof, so it is not with God as his mercy is. "His mercy is over all his works," even over the works of his anger. He is no where called an angry God, but a merciful God often. The Psalmist speaking of God's justice, and the fruits of his anger, saith, "His judgments are like the great mountains," Ps. xxxvi. 6, 7: but speaking of his goodness and mercy, saith, "It reacheth unto the clouds." What mountain doth so?

His mercy is for itself, he gives that he may give; he loves that he may love; and shews mercy that he may shew mercy: but he is not angry that he may be angry. The Lord is angry a little that he may love for ever, his very anger doth end in love.

Exod. iv. 14—16, "He is slow, the slowest to conceive a wrath, and ready to forgive:" he makes a way to his anger, but the way to mercy lies always open.*

Yet there is anger with him, he hath his days of anger. For as Aquinas says, *Excellentia irascentis est causa iræ.* The excellency of the person that is angry, is the cause of anger; the more excellency in a person, the sooner he is moved to anger, because *pervipensio* or contempt, is the greatest provocation to anger. Now there is most excellency in God, and therefore sin being a contempt of him, he cannot but be moved to anger. Anger is the dagger that love wears, to save itself, and to hurt all that wrongs the thing loved: there is love with God, infinite love in God, and therefore there must needs be anger too.

Yea, there is not only wrath, but great wrath with God. His works are like himself: if his anger fix on a person, it extendeth to all the man, soul and body. If one man be angry with another, he may afflict his body, but he cannot

* Iratus est Dominus adversus Moysem, Exod. iv. 14. In quo quæso furor ejus declaratur in quo ira ejus exprimitur? beneficium cognosco, non indignationem; ecce enim verse 15, pollicetur ei virum eloquentissimum in socium legationis et hunc in itinere sibi occursurum; an hæc signa indignationis vel potius amoris? sed Deus ita liberalis est ut nesciat eis cum punire debeat non benefacere. De Haye in Exod. iv. 14, 15.

reach his soul. God's anger doth especially seize on that part, because he is a Spirit, and doth reach the spirits.

Yea, his anger doth not only extend unto all the man, but as in heaven, when he pours out his glory upon men, he doth enlarge and enable the faculty to receive his mercy, which else could not take it in, or stand under it, the weight of glorious mercy would break the very soul: so, when he is angry, and pours out his wrath upon a person, he enlarges the soul and faculty to receive, and to bear the same.

He blocks up all ways of succour and relief when he is angry, which men cannot do; his own children cannot bear the strokes of his anger, though they be strokes of love;* what are they then when they do come from hatred?

His anger gives a being to all our angers. What is the wrath of man, kings, princes, or states, but, comparatively, as the claw of the dead lion? If the lion be dead, what hurt can his claw do? It is the anger of God that puts life into all our angers. One drop of his wrath distilled into the soul is able to burst it. Who knows the power of his anger? saith the psalmist. Oh, it is great, it is infinite, it is unspeakable, it is inconceivable: and this wrath and anger of his doth sometimes break forth upon the children of men; he hath his days of anger.

He hath three houses that he puts men into: an house of instruction, an house of correction, an house of destruction. If men mend not in the first they are removed to the second, if they mend not in the second they are removed to the third. As the creditor that lends his money gratis hath his three times; his time of mere love, his time of forbearance and patience after the money is due, his time of execution and judgment after forbearance and patience is tired.

So hath God also a time when he doth freely give forth mercies to the children of men: if they improve them, well; if not, yet then he hath patience with them and forbearance; but if after long forbearance they do not mend and turn unto him, then he brings his judgment, and does execution on them. Oh, there is wrath with God: God hath his days of anger.

Therefore it is not in itself unlawful to be angry, for God

* Si Deus tam aspere percutit ubi parcit, qua aspere percutiet ubi sævtit? et quanta destructione feriet quos reprobat, si sic cruciat quos amat?—Greg. moral.

is angry sometimes; only your wrath and anger must be in order to reformation, as God's is. "Be angry (says the apostle) and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath." The beer or drink may be good in the cup over-night, but if it stand all the night, it sours in the cup: so will your anger sour that stands all night in your hearts, which you lie in. Smoke may be borne whilst it goes up in the chimney, but if it break out into the house or room, it is most offensive: so is your anger too, yet it is not in itself unlawful to be angry.

Again, If there be wrath with God, and great wrath, how infinitely are our souls bound unto Jesus Christ, by whom we are delivered from the wrath to come, 1 Cor. v. 18, by whom we are reconciled to God the Father, and made friends to him; and being friends, his very wrath and anger are our friends also. As when a man is my friend, not only his power is my friend, his love is my friend, his purse is my friend; but his sword is my friend. So when God is my friend, not only his wisdom is my friend, his power my friend, and mercy my friend; but his wrath and anger are my friends also. Now suppose that one of you should be much in debt, so as not able to pay, and being arrested and carried away into prison, a man should come and pay all your debt, only desiring that you would love him, aad now and then go unto the prison to behold what he had delivered you from; would you not do it? Thus it is with Christ: you were all indebted, and so deeply that you were not able to pay; Christ hath paid our debt, and holds forth his empty veins, saying, Behold, these are the purses that I have emptied to pay your debt; only, I will that you love me, and look now and then upon the wrath and anger from which I have delivered you. Shall we not then love him? Oh that our hearts were inflamed in love unto Jesus Christ!

I have read of a certain monk, that being in a town where there was a great fire, and divers of the houses and families escaping, he ran up and down the town, saying to delivered persons, *Deo gratias pro te; Deo gratias pro me:* God be thanked for thee; God be thanked for me: God be thanked for thee, and God be thanked for me. Now this kingdom hath been all on fire, and we that are here, as so many firebrands pulled out of England's burnings. Who may not run up and down, saying, God be thanked for thee, and God be

thanked for me? But what is this fire to the fire of God's eternal wrath? and this we are delivered from by Christ. Oh, blessed be God for Christ, for his love in Christ.

Again, If there be wrath with God, and great wrath, which after forbearance breaks forth upon the children of men; then we see what great and just cause there is why those that are in place should send forth godly and faithful preachers into all the parts of this kingdom that may preach the gospel of peace. Every godly, faithful minister, preacher, is an under officer to Jesus Christ, a reconciler: "We beseech you, in Christ's stead, be reconciled," says the apostle, 1 Cor. v. 19, 20. Thousand and ten thousand souls in this kingdom that lie under wrath. Oh, that God would effectually stir up your hearts to send forth more labourers into this harvest. The harvest is great, the labourers few, but the work is necessary, for poor ignorant souls to be delivered from the wrath to come. What though every formality cannot be had now which you would have at another time? Sure it is necessary that men and women should be delivered from the wrath to come.

Melancthon* makes mention of two certain persons in Austin's time, that were in a ship which was like to perish in a storm at sea, the one very godly but yet not baptized, the other baptized but excommunicated; there being no other christian in the ship with them, and they fearing they should be both cast away, knew not what to do in that condition; he that was not baptized desired baptism by the hands of him that was excommunicate, and he that was excommunicated desired absolution from the other, and so it was concluded; whereupon the question was moved, whether these acts were valid and good.

Austin commended the actions, which I only mention to

* Augustin. ad Fortunatum narrat. historiam quæ continet eruditam disputationem; ait enim in una nove fuisse quendam pium, sed nondum baptizatum verum κατηχουμενον, et alterum baptizatum, qui tamen lapsus et si cuperat pœnitentiam agere, tamen nondum erat absolutus, quod juxta veteres canones irrogabantur poene exempli causa ante absolutionem. Addit Augustin. præter hos neminem ibi fuisse christianum; quum autem naufragium timerent, petit κατηχουμενος ab illo altero baptismum; qui cum isti impertiisset baptismum, visissim ab eo petit absolutionem; proinde quæritur an hæc administratio sacramentorum valuerit? Augustinus reste respondet valuisse; et quidam hanc historiam tantopere commendat ut dicat neminem tenere lachrymas posse qui eam audiat. disput. P. Melanch.—Lutheri Opera, tom i. 443. Wittebergæ 1558.

shew what men of judgment think lawful in case of necessity. I plead not for the like action: but now, if ever, there is a time of necessity, when some things may be done which are not ordinary. Do not ye hear the souls of poor, ignorant people crying from several countries, Help, O parliament! Help, O nobles! Help to deliver us from the wrath to come! And blessed are those persons that have a hand in so good a work as this.

Secondly, You may observe from the words, that in days and times of God's anger, he is exceeding willing to hide his own people; therefore he exhorteth them to the hiding means. "Seek ye the Lord," &c.

"Come, O my people," says the Lord by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xxvi., "enter into your chambers, and shut the doors about you, hide yourselves till the day of mine indignation be overpast."

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," says Christ, foreseeing the day of anger that was coming, "how often would I have gathered your children as a hen gathereth her chickens?" The hen doth, therefore, gather her chickens under her wings, that they may be hid from danger. Christ says, he would often have done it: "How often would I," &c., Luke xix 41. And that it may appear he was very willing, the text tells us that he wept over Jerusalem when he spake these words. Children weep upon all occasions, wise men seldom. It was some great matter that made Christ weep: here Christ weeps; and why? but because they would not be hidden. Yet this people a wicked and an ungodly people. Oh, how willing is he, then, for to hide the saints!

If he be so willing to hide his own children, how is it that so many of his dear servants have fallen in these late wars: some spoiled, wasted in their estates, some maimed in their bodies, some killed by sword: if God be willing to hide his people, why then so many exposed to dangers?

God will never sell away his people or their comforts but for a valuable consideration. Nothing of his children not dear unto them; their lives dear, their estates dear, their names dear: he will have a valuable consideration for whatever they lose; though they do lose for present, yet they do and shall gain thereby.* God knows how to deliver from

* Mercatura est quædam, minora amittere ut majora lucreris.—Parisiensis.

danger by danger, from death by death, from misery by misery. *Perjissem nisi perjissem.* I had been spoiled, unless I had been spoiled; wasted, unless I had been wasted;* undone, unless undone; and died, unless I had died, may many say. God can provide a chamber of preservation in the belly of destruction, as he did for Jonah in the whale's belly; and make the very miseries of his people to be a tender midwife to their great happiness. We do not always see the fence that is about Job: the devil saw it when Job's friends did not. God can and doth hide by cobwebs. I have read or heard of one of our English soldiers, when we went against some part of Spain, that when the Spaniards came down on our men to have cut them all off, crept under the stairs, into a hole there; the enemy seeking for him, came to the place, and finding a cobweb made over the mouth of the hole where he lay, said, Surely there are none here; so went away, and the poor man escaped. God hath many such cobwebs: and thatwhich we look upon as a mere cobweb, in which is no strength or shelter, God can and doth hide his people by.

Indeed, much of the saints' preservation is put into the hand of angels. And we read, in Ezekiel i., that their hands are under their wings; that is, work in an unseen way: yet work they do, and bear them up in their arms, hiding, preserving and keeping them by God's commission. God is very willing, then, exceeding willing to hide his own people in evil times.

Behold a shelter in the time of a storm: who would not fly to it? Shall God be willing to hide us, and shall not we be willing to be hidden by him? I know men will say, they are willing to be hidden; who is not willing to be hidden by by God? But, *qui vult finem, vult media, &c.* He that wills the end, in sincerity, wills the means also. And if indeed, you be willing to be hidden by God, observe who those are whom God hath hidden, or doth by promise engage for to hide, and labour to be like to such.

Those that hide the saints of God are sure to be hidden by God. Two sorts of evil times there are, as in Noah's days there were two floods; the flood of profaneness, which did first drown the world; and the flood of God's anger in water. And in our times, before the last flood and deluge of

* Christus ut bonus medicus aliquando non facit voluntatem ut faciat sanitatem.

blood broke out, there was a flood of superstition and wickedness, that had covered even the mountains of this kingdom. So in all times. And the first flood is the herald of the second. If a man shall provide an ark for God's children in the day of the first flood, God will provide an ark for him and his children in the day of the second flood.

Ebedmelech hid Jeremiah, as the prophecy of Jeremiah tells us, in the day of the king's anger; and therefore God hid him in the day of God's anger.

Rahab hid the spies; and God hid Rahab and her family.*

As God doth punish men in their own kind, so he doth reward men: both punishments and rewards have the names of their sins and graces engraven in their foreheads.

Our dear brother Joseph, (I mean Jesus Christ, who is not ashamed to be called our brother, as the apostle speaks,) will be sure to put our own money in our sack's mouth. God will hide every hiding Obadiah.

Again, Those that keep the word of God's patience, have a promise to be hidden by God: Rev. iii. 10, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, therefore I will deliver thee from the hour of temptation, which will come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." The word of God's patience, I take to be the truth which the saints suffered for in their time. Sometimes the saints suffer for one truth, and sometimes for another. In the days of Luther, the word of God's patience was, justification by faith alone, and of free grace. In the days of queen Mary, the word of God's patience was, The pope is antichrist, bread is not transubstantiated. Now, says the Holy Ghost, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee," &c.

Those are sure to be hidden by God in evil times, that fear not the fears of men, nor say a confederacy with them that say a confederacy. There are always confederacies against Christ, his cause and his children; and some out of fear are apt to be drawn into those confederacies. See what God says in this case: Isa. viii. 12, "Say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy;

* Si Rahab meretrix salutem consecuta est, cum omni domo sua, quia ducis a Deo missi exploratores semel excepit: quid ille consequentur qui Deum ipsum intra mentis suæ domum frequenter devote receperit? Heb. ii. 2.

neither fear ye fear, nor be afraid." Verse 13, "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." What then? Then at verse 14, "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." That is, for those that did say a confederacy; but as for those that did not say a confederacy, the Lord would be a sanctuary unto them.

Those are sure to be hidden by God, that remain green and flourishing in their religion, notwithstanding all the scorching heats of opposition that do fall on them. We read in Rev. ix., that an angel opening the bottomless pit, much smoke ascends, and out of the smoke came locusts like scorpions to destroy, but they might destroy no further than their commission reached; and their commission extends not to the green things. Verse 4, it was commanded them they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree. Some that are dried and withered in their profession; great professors they have been, and are now declined and withered; these may be hurt in the day of the locusts, but whoever remains green may not be touched.

And the text tells us, that the meek of the earth shall be hidden by God; they have a half promise here, and a whole promise in other places of Scripture.

Where is the person, therefore, that is thus qualified? You may go to God, and say, I confess, Lord, I am not worthy to be hidden by thee, I have sinned as others; yet through thy grace, I and my family have been an hiding place to thy children, I have kept the word of thy patience, not feared men's fear, nor said a confederacy with them; I am yet green in my profession, not so strong as the green tree, but yet green as the grass, not withered; and I do apply my soul to the ways of meekness: now, Lord, let me be hidden in this evil day that is come upon us. And, my beloved, as ever you desire to be hid in the day of God's anger, get your souls in-arked in all these promises and scriptures.

Thirdly, Ye may observe from the words, that though God is willing to hide his own people in evil times, yet he doth sometimes leave them at great uncertainties, that they may

not know what shall become of them, only with a may be, of their salvation.

They have more than a may be, for their eternal salvation. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," saith Job. "I am persuaded (saith Paul) that nothing shall separate me from the love of God," &c. Indeed God suffers his own children sometimes, to labour under many doubtings * and fears about their eternal salvation. Luther tells us of one, that lived a very gracious and holy life, yet when he came to die, being filled with doubtings, some of his friends came to him, saying, Sir, what need you be troubled, you have lived most exactly and graciously. True, saith he, I have indeed in your eye, but the eye of man and of God differs; God's judgment is one, and man's judgment another, and therefore now I do fear to die.† But there is an insuring office set up in the gospel, as to the venture of our eternities. "These things have I written (saith John, 1st Epist. v. 13) that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Not that ye may have eternal life, but that ye may know that ye have it.

But as for our temporal and outward salvation, God doth sometimes leave his people to a may be. So here; and in Joel ii. 14, "Who knows if he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" and Exod. xxxii. 30, "Peradventure (saith Moses) I shall make an atonement for your sin."

God loves to have his people trust to the goodness of his nature. If you have a man's word or promise for a kindness, then you trust to his promise. If you have his promise, you say, But he is full, and rich, and of a good nature, and therefore I will venture on him. And is there not infinite sweetness and goodness of nature in God?‡ As God would have us trust sometimes unto his promise, so unto the goodness of his nature; and therefore sometimes he gives but a may be. We are at great uncertainties with God; and when we are left unto uncertainties, then we think and say, Aye, this is just, I have been at uncertainties with God,

* Fidei certitudo importat firmitatem adhæsionis, non semper quietationem intellectus.—Parisiens.

† Alia sunt Dei et hominum judicia.

‡ Amat Deus; non aliunde hoc habet, sed ipse est unde amet; et ideo vehementius amat quia non amorem tam habet quam hoc est ipse.—Augustin.

sometimes praying, and sometimes not, and it is fit he should be so with me, that I may be minded of mine own sin.

The more uncertain a man is, the more, if not ingenuous, he will fear; and the more a man fears before the Lord, the more he will fly unto God: *timor nos fecit consiliativos.*

Truly we are not ingenuous enough towards God; were we more ingenuous, we should improve our assurance unto greater obedience. Therefore God is fain to rebuke our want of ingenuousness, and this uncertainty carries a report of it.

But suppose it be so, that in evil times we shall not be able to say what shall become of us, what is our duty then?

The fourth doctrine tells us, and so I come unto that, which is,

Fourthly, When the tokens of God's anger are abroad, and his people know not what will become of them, but have only a *may be* for their deliverance, then, and then especially, it is their duty for to seek unto God.

As the motions of the earth are guided and governed by the motions of the heavens; and the earth's fruitfulness depends on the heaven's influence: so do the motions of our hearts and lives, and all their fruitfulness, depend on the influence of God. When the scales are even, gold-weight, then is a fit time to put in some grains of prayer: who knows but that one prayer then may turn the scales?

It is the duty of all the saints, in days of God's anger, and uncertain times, to commit their ways unto God. I will tell thee, saith Job's friend to him, what I would do in thy case, "Unto God would I seek, unto God would I commit my cause," Job v. viii. "Commit thy ways unto God, and thy thoughts shall be established," saith Solomon, Prov. xvi. 3.

And indeed, there is no such way to establish our thoughts or kingdom, as to commit our ways unto God. Luther hath a notable story to this purpose: There was, saith he, a great contest between a duke of Saxony and a bishop of Germany, insomuch as the duke intended war against him; but before the war, he would send out a spy, to observe the bishop's actions and motions; and the spy being returned, Come, saith the duke, what is the bishop a doing? Oh, sir, saith he, you may easily surprize him, he lives without fear, idle, doing nothing, making no preparations for war. No,

said the duke, but what said the bishop then? He saith he will feed his flock, preach the word, visit the sick; and as for this war, he will *totius belli molem Deo committere*, he will commit the whole weight and bulk of the war unto God himself. Aye, saith the duke, then *bellum ei inferat diabolus, non ego;* then let the devil wage war against him, for I will not. Thus faith turns away the fury of the sword; and committing our cause unto God, turns away the anger and wrath of God. But a man cannot commit his cause unto God, unless he doth seek unto God; and therefore, when his anger is abroad, and people at uncertainty, then it is their duty, then and then especially for to seek unto him.

By this truth we know now what we ought to do.

Your thoughts may prevent me, and say, But the wrath and anger of God is pacified toward us, and this nation: is not the war at an end; are not our swords fully beaten into plough-shares?

Now I would to God it were so; and long, oh, long may you sit under your vines and fig-trees, praising the name of your God: yet give me leave to tell you three reasons why I conceive that God is angry with us still, the day of his anger not yet done.

1. The plague is begun. The beginnings of a plague are the signs of God's anger. "Run in quickly," saith Moses, "wrath is gone forth, the plague is begun," Num. xvi. 46.

2. I cannot but think God is angry with us still, because we are so angry with one another. When God is reconciled to a people, they are reconciled among themselves: our reconciliation an emanation of his. Then the lion and the lamb lie down together: then the sucking child plays on the hole of the asp. Then envy,* the root of all division, and the wrath of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah ceaseth, Isa. xi. Our love is a reflection of God's love. His love is the cause of our love; but our love is the sign of his love: so contrary. You may observe therefore what the Lord saith by Micah, chap, vii. 5, to this purpose, "Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide, keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom." These are treacherous times, and wrathful times. For, saith he, verse 6,

* Tolle invidiam et tuum est quod habeo, tolle invidiam et meum est quod habes.

"the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are they of his own house." Here is anger indeed, much like that of our times. But what is all this to God's anger? Yes, says he, verse 9, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." Where these things are in this posture, there is God's indignation.

You know the parable in Matt. xviii., "A certain servant owed his master a thousand talents, and said, I will go to my Lord, and say, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all, which he did, and his master forgave him. But then he meets with his fellow-servant that owed him an hundred pence: and when that servant said the like words unto him, which he spoke unto his master, he took him by the throat, and cast him into prison, which (says the parable) his Lord hearing of, was wrath." Beloved, God hath forgiven us a thousand talents: our fellow-servants owe us some lesser sums, and we cannot forgive them, but take them by the throat; surely our Lord and Master cannot but be angry still.

3. I cannot but think that God is angry with us still; because the former sins that God hath been punishing all this while, do still live among us: live in their principles, live in the spirit of them, live in their practises under other names and notions: old sins walking up and down under new clothes.

Three great sins there are for which God hath been contending with us for divers years. Idolatry and superstition. Opposition of the saints, and the power of godliness. Oppression and injustice. I know that for oaths and drunkenness, and adultery, the land hath mourned: but these three named, are the great capital sins that God doth usually draw out the sword against nations for.

Now I appeal to you: doth not idolatry and superstition live in the principle of it? Give me leave to instance in one particular: the superstitious men of the former times, commanded bowing before altars, at the name of Jesus, and before bread in the Lord's supper. But I pray, What was the principle whereby they forced their superstitions but this? That God commandeth the worship both of soul and

body; and it is in the power of the church to determine all circumstances: time and place are left to the church: and therefore when he come, said they, at the table, then ye shall bow. Not that we command the worship itself, that is commanded by God; we only command the time.

And so, when ye hear the name Jesus mentioned; and so when the bread comes before you in the Lord's supper. Now though our altars and groves be broken down; doth not this principle still live too much in our bosoms, that God commandeth the substance, and the circumstance is left unto men?

As for opposition to the saints, and the power of godliness; I confess it doth not run in the same channel as before. Before, profane men opposed the saints, and opposed professors; but now professors, oh, that I might not speak it, oppose professors. And is this more pleasing to God, that professors should oppose professors, than that profane men should oppose them?

As for oppression and injustice. What mean those cries out of several countries, and parts of this kingdom, of the widows and fatherless, Give me my husband's wages, or give me my husband again? Oh, give me my father again, or give me my father's wages? What mean those complaints of some, of many: We have borne the heat of the day and are no more kindlier used, or respected, than those that have been the most enemies? We ventured our whole estates in the beginning of this war, for this cause, and yet we are taxed as heavily as if our estates were all in our hands? Aquinas' rule is good, *Peccatum majus ubi specialis repugnantia inter peccantem et peccatum.* The sin is the greater where there is a special repugnancy between the sin and the sinner. Injustice is naught in all, but worst in a judge, or court of justice. Darkness is terrible, but when it falls upon the vessels of light, as in the eclipse, it is more terrible than the darkness of the night. And is there no injustice now in our courts of justice or in our committees in town or country? I wish I might not say the same sins live still, but disguised, and clothed in other habits: before the saints opposed under one name, and now under another; I cannot therefore but say, God is angry with us still, the day of his anger is not done. And is this nothing to you, oh, all

you that hear the word of the Lord this day, that God is angry still? When the lion roars, all the beasts of the field tremble: "The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion:" what then is the wrath of God the King of kings?" What more cutting word to the heart of an ingenuous child, than to say to him, Your father is angry? Oh, you that are the children of God, I tell you your father is angry, your heavenly father is angry still.

And as for the uncertainty of our condition: who knows or can say, what shall become of us? Some think the sword is dead, others no, but it sleepeth; some think, the three years and a half for slaying the three witnesses are over: others think no, that they are yet to come: some think the war is at an end, others think not. Whenever were the people of God at greater uncertainties than now they are?

What shall we do in this case?

The text points us unto three things.

Seek ye the Lord himself: not his goods, but his goodness; not his, but him.* If a poor condemned malefactor cry loud in the ears of the judge, though he useth many sweet appellations, Good my Lord, and the like, yet the judge regards him not; for, saith the judge, these are not out of love to me, but only thus he pleads and cries, and gives good words for to save himself. So saith God also, when we come before him in prayer and fasting; True, this people cry aloud, but it is for themselves, for their little ones, their substance, their corn, their wine, their oil, it is not for my name, and out of love unto me; and so he regards it not, though we cry loud, and fast often. Wherefore, seek ye the Lord himself, oh, all ye meek of the earth, that have wrought judgment, seek the Lord himself.

Again, would you know what to do in the day of God's anger, and uncertain times? Seek righteousness.

The righteousness of Christ: "He is the Lord our righteousness, when the Assyrian treads in the land," saith the prophet. "He shall bring peace, and raise up seven shepherds, and eight principal men:" seven is a note of perfection, that is abundance of help. He is that Shiloh,

* Hoc affectu ut desiderio colendus est Deus ut sui cultus ipse sit merces: nam qui Deum ideo colit ut aliud magis quam ipsum habeat, non Deum colit, sed illud quod assequi concupiscit.—Augustin.

who should give peace when the sceptre should depart from Judah. He is that Prince of peace, the great Mediator between a distanced God and us. When the sea rages he will say to it, "Be still;" though the disciples say, "Lord, carest thou not that we perish?" His wounds are the cities of refuge. "If his anger be kindled, yea, but a little, blessed are all they that trust in him:" so we read it; or, as some better, "that betake themselves unto him." Is this therefore a day of God's anger? Come, oh, come unto Jesus Christ that ye may be hidden by him. You will say, Oh, but I have been a great sinner, a drunkard, a swearer, unclean, opposer, scorner, and a very rebellious wretch.

But doth not the psalmist say, "He hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also?" Psa. lxviii. 18. Not only for sinners, but for rebellious sinners even for the rebellious also. Hath he not made an invitation to all? Doth not the proclamation run general, "Ho, every one that thirsteth come?" Hath not he himself said, "Those that come unto me, I will in no wise cast out?" Yea, hath he not said, "Every sin and blasphemy," except the sin against the Holy Ghost "shall be forgiven unto men?" yea, though it be such a sin as boils up unto blasphemy? And hath he not said, "Look unto me from all the ends of the earth and be saved?" Oh, therefore, whatever your lives have been, whatever course you have run, come unto Jesus Christ: come poor, sinful, vile wretch, come and be saved for ever. Do not come unto Christ that you may live wickedly; nor think to be first holy, that you may come unto Christ; but come unto Christ that you may be holy. Seek the Lord and his righteousness in this respect.

Again, Seek righteousness, in opposition to all injustice and oppression. If private men, seek righteousness in all your dealings. The righteous just God, loveth righteous dealings. If magistrates, seek righteousness in opposition to all oppression: and if the cause of the poor and of Christ come before you, say not, Go away, and come again, when it is in the power of your hand to help them.

Surius* tells us of a certain poor woman that came to Ba-

* Mulier pauper Basilum adiit, et ab eo literas petiit ad perfectum regionis, tanquam qui apud illum plurimum posset; arrepta charta, scripsit in hæc verba, accessit ad me ista muliercula, inops, dicens litteras meas apud te pondus ha

sil, desiring him to write to the governor of the place for favour: I am greatly taxed, and I know, saith she, that your letter may do me a great deal of pleasure: he writes; and says he in his letter: This woman tells me, that my letter hath weight with you: if so, then I pray help her. The governor returns this answer, I would with all my heart have helped this woman for your sake, but I cannot, she is under such and such taxes, I cannot relieve her. Well, says Basil, in his reply, *Si adsit voluntas, &c.* If you had a will, and wanted power, it is tolerable: but if you had a power, and wanted will, God will bring you into a poor condition. Afterward, through the disfavour of the emperor, this governor was thrown into prison, and then he sent to Basil to intercede for him, which he did, and after six days he was delivered: and then he comes to Basil, and shews twice as much favour to the woman then, as she desired before. So apt are men in place to say, we cannot help, when they will not.* Take heed of that. And take heed of delaying justice; for sometimes the very delay of justice, is injustice. Know we not, that thrones are established by righteousness? and so kingdoms. "The mountains (saith the Psalmist) shall bring peace unto the people, and the little hills by righteousness."

Oh, therefore, as you desire that this our kingdom may be established in peace, seek righteousness: and let it come to us by you that are the mountains and nobles of this land: yea, even by you also that are the lesser hills of this kingdom, "seek ye the Lord and his righteousness:" righteousness, righteousness we cry for, that the oppressed may be relieved, the wicked punished, and the poor saints in all parts of these kingdoms refreshed. And if righteousness be out of sight, and as it were lost, yet seek it. Seek righteousness, in opposition to all injustice.

bere; si sic est, id fac ostendas; tradidit mulieri chartulam quam illa obtulit præfecto, at ille sic rescripsit, hac causa libens essem misertus mulierculæ, sed non potui eo quod subjaceat tributis; cui rursus Basilius ita replicavit, si quidem voluntas prompta fuit, sed de fuit facultas, tolerabile quidem est; si autem potuisti et noluisti, Christus te in ordinem inopum rediget; quod quidem re ipsa evenit; nam non multo post imperatoris ira in illum concitata, in vincula conjectus est; hinc vero preces offert Basilio ut sua intercessione imperatoris clementiam ipse conciliet, idque sic fastum; post sex namque dies jussus est a vinculis absolvi, &c. Sur. 1. Tom. in vita Basil.

* Non est dicendus velle quicum potuit non fecit.

Again, seek righteousness in seeking the truth. The truth and gospel is called "the word of righteousness," Heb. v.; Isa. xxvi. The righteous nation are expounded in the same verse, to be such as do keep the truth. When truth falls in the city or streets, God's anger breaks forth; when truth is raised up again, then God is pacified. Is the Lord angry with us now, and would you know what to do in this day of God's anger? Seek the truth, seek righteousness in this respect.

Only in seeking this part of righteousness, take these rules along with you:

In seeking the truth, do not despise any truth because it is called old, nor neglect any truth because it is called new. It is a sign that men mean to sleep, when they draw the curtains about them, and will have no more light to come in. The reapers of the former reformation, could not so bind up all ears of corn into their sheaves, but there will be some ears left for the poor that come after to glean up.

Again, in seeking the truth, be as plain, sincere, open-hearted as ever you can. *Veritas stat in aperto campo.* Truth stands in the open fields, in this sense. Truth knows no bushes, no houses, no relations. Christ who is truth, said, Woman, not mother, as knowing no relations in matters of religion. It was indeed the speech of one heathen, *Facite me Romanum episcopum et ero protinus christianus.* Make me bishop of Rome, and I will be presently a christian. And now, many men will know no more truth, than what can grow upon their own land. Some would have the truth come down to them and to their interests; some will bring up their interest to truth. Ever let my soul cleave unto those that can lay down all their engagements, relations and comforts, at the feet of truth.

In seeking truth, rest not upon any means though it be never so great, nor despise any means though it be never so small. *Sanctorum minima Deo placent maxime.* God loves the saints' minnums, and delights to reveal his truths to those that are most unlikely. The great truth of the incarnation, first revealed to shepherds. The great truth of the resurrection, first revealed to Mary, a woman. And when Christ came, and gave the world a taste of his kingdom, riding upon an ass' colt: the multitude, who were then counted cursed

with the disciples, cry out, Hosanna, and own him; when at the same time, the scribes and pharisees in council make an order and decree to apprehend him, John xi. 53; with John xii. 12; and Matt. xxi. 8, 9. God loves to take those things and persons that stand behind, and to bring them before. The temple is refused, and the synagogue is kept. In the Jews' time, when any were proselyted, they were washed and circumcised; the great ordinance of circumcision was laid aside, and washing advanced unto a sacrament of baptism. At the passover, they had their ordinary supper and the paschal lamb: the use of the paschal lamb laid aside, and bread and wine, which was used in the ordinary supper, exalted to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Thus God exalts low things, and lays by greater. I speak not this that men should neglect the ministry; preachers' lips shall and do preserve knowledge; but rest not on means, though they be never so learned; despise not means, though they be never so unlearned. Who more despised for want of learning than the Waldenses,* and yet the first blessed instruments of reformation.

In seeking truth, "look not to gather grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles;" to find the scions of truth upon a crab-stock of error or carnal principles.

They write of the partridge, that if one hen lay the egg, and another hatch the bird, it will return to the true mother when it is well grown. And this, saith Drusius Caminus Jerome, is the meaning of that in Jer. xvii. 11, "As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." But this we know certainly, that though an hen sit on a raven's egg, yet when the young raven is hatched, and its wings well grown, it will fly away and leave the hen in the lurch. So will all carnal principles deal by spiritual truths. Oh, therefore, let not any gospel truth be planted on a legal principle; not a spiritual truth on a carnal or mere philosophical principle; not a truth of Christ on an antichristian principle.†

* Vide Hist. Waldens.

† Ex philosophorum principiis omnis hæresis animatur; omnes hæreses ex philosophorum regulis constant, cum dogmata hæreticorum frigent et volare non possunt, sedem sibi et requiem inter Aristotelis spineta reperiunt.

Again, In seeking the truth, do not so hold the greater as to neglect the lesser; do not so seek the lesser as to forget the greater. Indeed, no truth of the gospel purchased by Christ's blood is small or little, though comparatively with others it may be called so.

And here I cannot but say I have seen a sore evil under the sun, men losing their religion in seeking for religion; losing the power of religion in seeking for the due form: others losing the right form and circumstantials in resting upon fundamentals. We have enough to bring us to heaven, what need we more? say some.* Would you therefore so seek the truth as you may find it? do not forget your old acquaintance, those great and precious truths which nursed you in the cradle of your godliness; the great truths of Christ, the power of godliness, and humiliation for sin committed. And take heed that you do not look awry, or cast a proud look on small truths, yea, though strangers, for some have entertained angels by receiving these strangers. Every truth is a stranger at the first. What truth was ever received but was first opposed? Christ and his gospel is first a little stone, then a great stone, then breaking the mountains, then filling the world. Hold, therefore, your old fundamental truths, yet so as you may raise your buildings. Seek your buildings, yet so as you may keep foundations. Thus seek the truth, this part of righteousness.

And, again, If you would know what to do in the day of God's anger, so as to be hidden; seek meekness: righteousness and meekness.

And so I come unto the fifth and last doctrine.

Fifthly, That if any man can do any good in the day of God's anger, either for himself or others, it is the "meek of the earth;" therefore the text calls on them especially for to seek the Lord.

The meek of all other men have the promise of the earth. "The meek shall inherit the earth." This promise, or spring, rises in the Old Testament, the head of it is there, and runs down into the New: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," Matt. v. It seems this entail was not cut off by the coming of Jesus Christ.

* Minime bonus est qui melior esse non vult; et ubi incipit nolle fieri melior, ibi definis esse bonus.

The meek of all other men do most honour Christ, the way of Christ, and the gospel. The heathens had this notion amongst them, as Lactantius reports,* that the way to honour their gods was to be like to them; and therefore some would be wicked, counting it a dishonour to their god to be unlike to him. I am sure we have a meek and sweet dispositioned Saviour: "Learn of me (saith he) for I am meek and lowly." A physician and surgeon, who as he hath a quick eye, so a mild heart and a tender hand. The more meek a man is, the more he is like to him, and honours him. What says the world? Aye, there is a man of a humble, quiet and sweet disposition; if all professors were such, then I would become one too.

A meek person leaves his cause to God, and his revenge to him; is led by the hand of God, *mansuetus quasi manui assuetus:* and when men do, and are so, God comes in quickly for their relief. Aaron and Miriam rose up against Moses, Moses is silent, carries it meekly, and the text says, Num. xii. "Then God arose, and was very angry." And the reason is given, because Moses was the meekest man. A meek man is subject to God in all conditions, gives up his matters to him, and so God takes himself engaged for his succour.

Again, The meek person above all others is most fit for the service of God. If I would convey a reproof, or a reprehension into the heart of a man, a meek and sweet disposition is the most fit for to do it with. If I would convey a comfort or consolation into a man's heart, a meek disposition is most fit for that. Christ gave the gospel, and he was meek; Moses gave the law, and he the meekest man upon earth in his time. So that whether law or gospel, it is best handed into the heart by meekness. I may with a soft breath blow a feather further than with strength of arm I can throw it. God loves those that are like himself. The Holy Ghost is compared to a dove, Christ is called a lamb, the Father, love itself in the abstract; no wonder, then, that a meek person, being so like to God, hath so great an interest and credit in heaven.

And if these things be so, how little is this poor nation and kingdom beholding to those that are of a froward, harsh and perverse spirit; they disturb their own souls, they disturb

* Quoniam mores et vitia regis imitari genus obsequii est; abjecerunt pietatem ne exprobrare regi (Jovi) scelus viderentur.—Lactantius.

their own families, they disturb the place and kingdom where they live. If a meek person shall be hid in the day of God's anger, oh, where will you appear that are of a froward temper? I say, where will you appear in the evil day? Bear the word of exhortation. It is only to get a sweet and loving disposition. Oh, that our love might flourish at last and abound towards one another and to all the saints.

Hereby, even your meekness, ye walk as becometh the gospel, ye inherit the earth, are made like unto Jesus Christ, have a great power and credit in heaven for yourselves and others, and shall be hidden in the evil day.

And therefore, if any are here that are of a froward and perverse disposition, go to God and say, Lord, give me meekness; and wherein I have been froward, either in my family or elsewhere, forgive me this frowardness, and let not the kingdom fare the worse by it.

It may be you will say, Oh, but he, or he, or he hath much provoked me, and I cannot bear it.

But suppose that you have a ball of gold in your hand, and another throw dirt in your face, will you throw away that golden ball at him, because of the dirt that he doth throw on you? This meekness, sweet disposition, is your ball of gold; and what though he throw dirt in your face? you must wash the dirt off his feet. Christ did so, washed his disciples' feet. And for our example, Luther calls upon magistrates, ministers, and all people, to tuck up their sleeves, and to fall a washing of the disciples' feet, by a loving and sweet submitting of our excellencies unto their infirmities.

But, Lord, how contrary are we unto Christ? He washed his disciples' feet; we throw dirt in disciples' faces. Oh that this guilt may not cleave to our souls in our dying day! If this day we could but stand up and forgive one another, and learn meekness and sweetness towards one another, it would prevail more with God than all our fasting and prayer; and without it, all our fasting and prayer is of no avail.

But my exhortation is unto you, especially, that are the meek of the earth. Ye hear what interest, power and credit ye have in heaven: seeing ye have so great an interest, away, away to your Father's knee, and for poor England's sake improve your interest, and for Ireland's, Scotland's sake hold not your peace: your dear and tender Father will bid your

prayers welcome. Take a prospect of our sad condition: do ye not hear how Ireland cries, Help, help, O living England, help poor, dying Ireland! Do ye not hear how our afflicted, plundered and spoiled brethren in other parts of this kingdom cry, Have pity, have pity upon us, oh, all our friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched us! How the poor, ignorant cry out of the countries, Oh, help to deliver us from the wrath to come! How this whole staggering nation cries, If ever you help, help now; if you have an interest in heaven, use it now!

Now, therefore, according to all your engagements here and your interest in heaven, go pray, cry, and cease not; you may do much, you shall do much: for if any man in the earth can do any good, it is the "meek of the earth." Wherefore, oh, all you that are the meek of the earth, I beseech you improve your interest, seek ye the Lord: and not only this day, but all your days, seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be you, and others by you, shall be hidden "in the day of the Lord's anger."

SERMON XVI.

ENGLAND SAVED WITH A NOTWITHSTANDING.

Represented to the Honourable House of Commons, Nov. 5, 1647, the Day of Thanksgiving for Deliverance from the Powder-Plot.

To the Honourable House of Commons assembled in Parliament.

In what frosts and snows your hand hath cleaved to your plough, is not unknown to this kingdom; unthankfulness may say you have done little for us, but the truth cannot. "Magistratus labor major rusticano," Luther. "Gubernatio est divina quædam vertus, ideoque vocat Deus magistratus omnes, Deos, non propter creationem, sed propter administrationem, quæ solius Dei est, qui igitur in regimine est, est quasi Deus incarnatus," Luther in Gen. The Lord hath said ye are gods. Still therefore be pleased to act unweariedly and unchangeably. God doth save us with a *notwithstanding* our reluctancy, so should the magistrate. God is a Father of the fatherless, and an help to the oppressed; gathereth the outcasts, careth for those whom none careth for, and doth sometimes carve for them first who do sit lowest. So should magistrates be and do; and therefore the Lord, having said concerning magistrates that they are gods, Ps. lxxxii. 1, he addeth in ver. 3, 4, "Deliver ye the poor and needy," &c. The magistrate should not always stay until the crying complaints of the poor be brought to him, but should sometimes seek and inquire after them. The cry of the afflicted belongs to the magistrate, though they cry not to him. Musculus therefore observes well, that the psalmist doth not say of the magistrate, "He shall deliver the poor and needy" when he crieth unto him, but, "when he crieth," Ps. lxxii. 12. "Clamor afflictorum pertinet ad eos, qui in magistratu sunt etiam si ad ipsos non clametur; nam non dicit, liberabit egenum ad se clamantem, sed clamentem et afflictum cui non est adjutor, hoc est, cui nihil est in rebus afflictis patrocinii," Musculus in Psal. God is a God of love, mercy and grace; he is called love itself, not justice, though he be so, but God is love: so should the magistrate be, full of love, bowels, and tender compassions unto the people; therefore he is called, father, tender father, and *Nasi*, not only because he is lifted up above the people, but because he doth lift up, or ease their burthen, and doth *potare populum in gremio suo.* "אב ab אבה velle quasi volens bene suis aut benevolus dictus, אברך Gen. xli., aliqui ducunt a ברכ benedixit, genua flexit. clamabant enim autem cum, genua flecte: sic Aben Ezra: alii dividunt verbum in אב et רכ R. Solomon quod רכ in lingua Aramæa est rex nam Joseph fuit pater regia: sed vox Ebraica רכ significat tener, mollis, quia princeps tener et mollis pater est, Mayer. philolog. Saer. par. prima p. 116. נשיא a נשא levavit, elevavit, sublevavit, portavit." Now, most worthy patriots, ye have conquered this kingdom with your sword, conquer us once more with your love, in providing for the poor, desolate, and in healing our sad divisions with a fatherly hand, and you are complete saviours and fathers to this bleeding kingdom. "Pacem nos poscimus," but not such a peace, as Augustine speaks, "ut inimici

submittant, sed ut amici jungant." I had thought to have been, *date veniam verbo*, disobedient to your command of printing this sermon, but being persuaded that it may in some measure conduce unto love both towards God and man, I chose rather to disobey mine own inclinations than your order. Now the Lord himself make you the repairers of our breaches, and the restorers of paths to dwell in: which is and must be the prayer of

Your servant in the gospel of Christ,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

"Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake: that he might make his mighty power to be known."—PSALM CVI. 8.

THIS psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving, as the first and last verses declare. Now because a man is most fit to praise God, when he is most sensible of his own sin and unworthiness; the psalmist doth throughout this psalm, lay Israel's sin and God's mercy together. Ver. 7, "Our fathers (says he) understood not the wonders in Egypt."

They saw them with their eyes, but they did not understand them with their heart; they did not apprehend the design and scope and end of God in those wonders: and therefore, "they remembered not (says the text) thy mercies;" for a man remembers no more than he understands.

But it may be these mercies were very few, and so their sin in forgetfulness the less?

Nay, not so, for verse 7, "They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies."

But it may be this was their infirmity or weakness, and so they were the rather to be borne withal?

Not so, "but they rebelled against him;" so Montanus reads it better.*

But it may be this sin was committed whilst they were in Egypt, among the Egyptians, being put on by them?

Not so neither, but when they were come out of Egypt, and only had to deal with God, and saw his glorious power at the Red Sea, then they rebelled against him, "At the sea, even at the Red Sea."

What then, did not the Lord destroy them?

* וימרו sed rebellaverunt a מרה: non dicit, et obedientes, vel hæsitantes aut tergiversantes, sed rebelles fuerunt; rebellio est qua per contumaciam et contumeliam adversatur subditus majori suo; sic Israelitæ non simpliciter detrectabant obsequi, sed addebant murmura, obloquia, contumelias adversus Deum et Moysen.—Musculus in Psal.

No, says the text, " Notwithstanding " all their ignorance, unthankfulness, and their rebellion, " he saved them for his name's sake.

" He saved them ;" that is, with an outward salvation.

" For his name's sake ;" the name of God is that whereby he is made known unto us. God's working for his name's sake, is still set in opposition to our deservings.

God doth sometimes work for his name's sake, that it may not be defiled and polluted by men. Sometimes, that the glory and honour of his name may shine out the more. In both these respects the words are to be understood, but especially they are meant in the latter; and so they are explained in Isa. lxiii. 12. And to this purpose the following words, " That he might make his mighty power known." The word in the Hebrew is, To make known his mighty power.*

Much of God's power is to be read and known in all his creatures; but in this their deliverance at the Red Sea, there were the special prints of his fingers, the characters and marks of his infinite power and deity, whereby he might be plainly and clearly known. And that this name and power of his might be thus known, he did save them with a *notwithstanding* all their former sins. Whence observe two things:

First, Though the sin of a people be exceeding great, and very heinous, yet God will and doth sometimes save them for his own name's sake. He doth sometimes save his people with a *notwithstanding:* notwithstanding all their sin and guilt.

Secondly, When God doth thus save his people with a *notwithstanding*, he doth then leave such marks and characters of his mighty power upon their salvation, that he may be clearly and fully known and manifested to the sons of men.

First, God doth sometimes save his people, with a *notwithstanding* all their sin and all their unworthiness.

For God is gracious to a people, as well as to a person. The blood of Jesus Christ is sprinkled on nations, as well as particular persons. Now for a particular person; ye read in 1 Tim. i. 15, how the Lord dealt with Paul: saith Paul himself, " I was a blasphemer, injurious, persecutor; never-

* להודיע ad notificandum fortitudinem suam.—Ar. Montanus.

theless I obtained mercy, although I did it ignorantly through unbelief," or, Notwithstanding I did it ignorantly &c. Ye read the words ordinarily thus, For I did it ignorantly ; as if ignorance were the reason of his conversion, by way of excuse : but the Greek οτι which you translate *for*, may be read, *although*. As in Luke xxiii. 40, "Fearest thou not God," saith the thief on the cross to his fellow, "seeing, (or although) thou art in the same condemnation?"* So Acts i. 17, "Who," speaking of Judas, "was guide to them that took Jesus, although he was numbered with us:" ye read it ordinarily *for*, but it should he rather rendered *although*, for it is the same οτι. Neither can it be truly translated *for*, by way of extenuation, it being an aggravation rather : for sins of ignorance are of two sorts : either such as are simple ignorance; or of prave disposition. Simple ignorance doth excuse; but ignorance of prave, or ill disposition doth aggravate. Such was Paul's ignorance :† for, says he, I did it ignorantly

* Οτι εν τω αυτω κριματι ει, Luke xxiii. 40. Οτι κατηριθμημενος ην συν ημιν, Acts i. 17. Vulg. annumerabatur enim nobiscum, quasi esset ratio cur iste se ducem præbuerit illis qui Christum caplebant, cum contrarium velit apostolus, hoc modo, ille Judas a diabolo et carne sua seductus eo pervenit dementiæ, ut suum dominum turpiter prodiderit, quamvis cum aliis maximis ab eo sit affectus beneficiis, tum vel hoc inprimis ornatus, quod in numerum et collegium apostolorum erat cooptatus.—Tarnov. exercit. bibl. 188, 189.

† Paulus cum verbum de Christo prædicato andiret, nolebat credere, sed repugnabat, ut alii pharisæi, licet hic eis fervidius, fecit enim ea quæ sunt infidelitatis; hoc est, non tantum habuerit fidei vacuitatem, sed etiam malorum operum plenitudinem : quo spectat quod vox απιστιας sæpe includat απειθειαν imo repugnantiam. Ignorantia facti et circumstantiæ excusat, in tantum, non in totum, sed Paulus peccavit ex ignorantia juris, quæ non excusat. Nam Paulus se vocat peccatorem primum seu præcipuum, et misericordiam Dei prædicat, quæ, quo peccatum majus, eo et ipsa major. quamvis igitur Paulus pharisæus, cum scire omnino posset et deberet, Jerosolymis vivens, Christi doctrinam esse divinam, quippe tot miraculis, confirmatam, ipsumque esse mundi salvatorem in V. Test. promissam, tamen oculos ad tantam lucem claudens, volens illam ignorabit quam habere poterat, si non restitisset præfracte; et jam id admirans dicebat, gratiam nihilominus sibi esse factam, quantumvis ignorans fecerit illa sua incredulitate, Idem 1106, 1107, &c. quomodo igitur per οτι vel quia, ignorantia potest constitui causæ ? quum extraordinaria præter Dei voluntatem nullam habeant, saltem quod nos sciamus, causam. Paulus enim hic constituitur προς υποϋπωσιν omnium qui sunt crediturl, confer, v. 15, 16. Et hic versu 16 est causa cur deus Paulus converterit δια τουτο si enim οτι vertis causaliter, tum ignorantia et incredulitas erunt causo remissionis peccatorum, et proinde omnis qui peccat ex incredulitate et ignorantia, ut Judæi, Act. xxxvii. 13, 27; 1 Cor. ii. 6, gratiam consequitur, quod tamen falsum est, Idem, exercit. bibl. page 193, 189.

in unbelief. He doth not barely say, *I did it ignorantly*; but ignorantly *in unbelief*: which is the worst disposition, and that doth aggravate.

Besides, ignorance is either such as is invincible, and cannot be helped; or such as is wilful and may be helped: such was Paul's ignorance, for he stood by, and held the clothes of those that stoned Stephen. There was enough done and said before him to convince him of Christ, and therefore his ignorance was rather aggravating.

Yea, and as Tarnovius doth well observe, Paul in this Scripture doth not go about to extenuate, but aggravate his sin. Witness the precedent, and following words: in the precedent words, says he, "I was a blasphemer," and "a persecutor," and "injurious." In the following words, "whereof I am chief," &c.

Besides, the conversion of Paul was miraculous, and not to be laid on the ordinary cause of ignorance: and if he were therefore converted because ignorant, then all that are ignorant should be converted; but not so, we see the contrary. The words therefore, are not to be read with *for*, but with an *although*, or with a *notwithstanding*, thus: I was a blasphemer, injurious, persecutor, *nevertheless* I obtained mercy, *although* I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

And will the Lord save a particular person with a *notwithstanding*, and will he not save a people, his people with a *notwithstanding* all their guilt and sin?

God keeps the same method in giving out the benefits that do come by Christ, as in giving out of Christ himself. Now for Christ himself: the first promise that was given of him, was given with a *notwithstanding*, Notwithstanding the great sin that Adam and Eve committed in the fall, *yet*, says the Lord, "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head."

Thus in the types of Christ; there were three great types of him in the wilderness: the manna, the brazen serpent, and the rock: but though all these were types, yet *the rock* especially: and therefore in 1 Cor. x. 4, says the apostle, "And that rock was Christ." He had said before, they did all eat the same spiritual meat; yet he doth not say, And that *meat* was Christ, or that *manna* was Christ: but having said, They all drank of the same spiritual rock, he addeth,

And that *rock* was Christ. Why? but because the rock and water was a special type of Christ. Now if we look into the history, we shall find, that the waters of the rock, whereby Israel were saved from death, was given with a *notwithstanding:* they murmured, and sinned much through unbelief; yet the Lord struck the rock, and waters came forth like honey; yea, and the apostle tells us that the rock followed them, they did not follow the *rock*, but the rock went after them. And when Christ himself came into the world, ye may read in Luke iii. what a pack of wicked men were then in Judea that were in office; Pontius Pilate, Herod, Annas and Caiaphas; yet then, even *then* did Christ come *notwithstanding* all the malice of those tyrants and times. And if ye look into Isa. lvii. 17, ye may read a clear proof of all this, "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." What then? "I have seen his ways," verse 18, "I will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners." All this is spoken of a people, as well as of a particular person. Here is mercy, here is love, here is pardon with a *notwithstanding*. So that God doth sometimes save his people with a *notwithstanding all their sins*. That is the first reason.

Again, if God should not shew mercy to his people with a *notwithstanding*; how should the glory of his mercy appear? If a physician should only cure a man that hath the head-ache or tooth-ache; one that hath taken cold, or some small disease; it would not argue any great skill and excellency in the physician. But when a man is nigh unto death, hath one foot in the grave, or is, in the eye of reason, past all recovery; if then the physician cure him, it argues much the skill and excellency of that physician. So now, if God should only cure, and save a people that were less evil and wicked; or that were good indeed, where should the excellency of mercy appear? But when a people shall be drawing on, lying bed-rid, as it were, and the Lord out of his free love, for his own name's sake, shall rise, and cure such an unworthy people, this sets out the glory of his mercy. Read therefore, and consider what is said in Ps. lxxxvii. 3. Glorious things are spoken *of thee*: but rather,

according to the Hebrew, *in thee,* O thou city of God.* What are those glorious things? Verse 4, I will make mention of Rahab, and Babylon, to them that know me: Rahab signifies, pride and insolence; for Egypt dealt proudly and insolently with the people of God; Babylon also oppressed them sorely, and held them in captivity; yet, says the Lord, I will make mention of Egypt and Babylon to them that know me. Yea, Philistia, and Tyre, and Ethiopia; men and people that were very wicked, shall be found with the saints; the Lord will take special notice of them, as of those in Zion. What then? Then glorious things shall be spoken *in thee.* Mercy is never glorious, but when it is *rich;* it is never rich, but when it is *free;* and the more free it is, and works with a *notwithstanding,* the more glorious it is. Now God, who is the God of glory, will have his mercy, which is his glory, made glorious; and therefore, though the sin of a people be exceeding great, and very heinous, yet he will sometimes save them for his own name's sake, with a *notwithstanding* all their sins.

If God doth sometimes save a people with a *notwithstanding* all their sin: then it is possible, I see nothing in the word contrary to it, but that England, Scotland, Ireland, may yet be saved, with an outward salvation, notwithstanding all our fears, notwithstanding all our sins. The Lord saved Israel, brought them out of Egypt through the Red Sea, *notwithstanding* all their rebellion. The Lord saved Lot out of Sodom, *notwithstanding* he saw what he would do with his two daughters afterward. The Lord saved Israel out of Babylon, *notwithstanding* that they were loth to depart, and were grown exceeding vile and very wicked there. The Jews were a people that were under the law; indeed they were saved by the same covenant of grace that we are, and by Jesus Christ as we are, yet were under the law, for God dealt with them in a more legal way and manner than he doth deal by us. And did the Lord's grace and free love so strive upon them, as to save them with a *notwithstanding,* and shall not his grace and love now strive upon his gospel-people, to save, and deliver them with a *notwithstanding?* Were they under the law, and yet saved by grace? Did the Lord save the Mosaical Israel, for his own name's sake, with

* תרבר כך gloriosa dicta in te.—Ar. Mont.

a *notwithstanding;* and shall he not save christian Israel, in a way of free love, with a *notwithstanding* also? Surely the Lord is as full of grace now, in the times of the New Testament, as ever he was in the times of the Old Testament.

But we are a people that have been much defiled with the superstitions of the former times, and the idolatry thereof.

And was not Israel so in the land of Egypt? read Ezek. xx.

Oh, but since the Lord hath been pleased to come among us, and make a tender, and offer of reformation, we have been unwilling to it.

True, but were not Israel unwilling to go out of the land of Egypt?

But we are not only unwilling, but we have risen up against, and murmured, and chidden with those that would have been our reformers.

And did not Israel chide with Moses?

Oh, but we have sinned worse than they, for we have sinned greatly in the face of all those glorious mercies, which God hath shewed of late among us.

And I pray consider it, was it not thus with Israel? It is said in the verse precedent; They rebelled at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Or, as in the Hebrew, even *in* the Red Sea:* when the waters stood like walls on both sides of them; when they saw those walls of waters that never people saw before, and saw the power, the infinite power of God leading them through on dry land; *then* did they rebel, at the sea, *even in* the sea; and yet for all this the Lord saved them, he saved them with a *notwithstanding* all this. And I say, shall the Lord put forth so much of grace upon a people, that were under the law; and not put forth much more of his grace upon those that are under the gospel? O England, England, I cannot write thee lost or forsaken; thou mayest yet be saved, I speak of outward salvation, thou mayest yet be saved, notwithstanding all thy fears, and all thy sins.

* על־ים בימסוף. Græc. Και παρεπικραναν αναβαινοντες επι της ερυθρα θαλασσης. Vulg. lat. in mare. Hieron. in mari rubro; erant in grandi et præsenti, et inevitabili discrimine constituti. nam Egyptii a tergo, montibus impediebantur ne vel ad dextram vel ad sinistram declinare, mari vero ne progredi possent occludebantur: hisce augustiis inclusi murmurabant et rebellabant ubi potissimum divinæ bonitatis memoria vigere debet.—Muscul. in Nas.

Yea, the Lord hath saved us, he hath saved us with a *notwithstanding:* as great and large a *notwithstanding* as ever people and nation were saved with. Witness the mercy, and deliverance of this day. When the powder-treason was on foot, what a dark night of security had trodden upon the glory of our English day? Then did our strength lie fast asleep in the lap of Dalilah. What pride, oppression, court-uncleanness, superstitions, and persecutions of the saints then, under the name of Puritans! Nevertheless he saved us, and our fathers.

And now of late what bitterness of spirit among professors; what divisions; oppressions, instead of justice; what new-fangled prides; what unwillingness to be reformed? Time was heretofore when we did call for truth, and cried aloud for truth; oh, that we might know the truth. But now we deal by truth, as the friar said the people did by their holy-water; Ye call, and cry, said he, for holy water, but when the sexton sprinkles it, ye turn away your faces, and it falls upon your backs. So the times were heretofore that we called, and cried out for truth, truth: it is now come unto you, we would sprinkle it upon you, but you turn away your faces from it, and it falls upon your backs.

And is there not as much swearing, drunkenness, profaneness still as before? I read of a street in Rome, called *Vicus Sobrius,* the sober street: because there was never an ale-house to be found in it. And upon this account, I think there will be never a sober street in England; or very rare.

As for the precious ordinances of Jesus Christ, never so slighted, and rejected as now. Nevertheless, the Lord hath saved us; yea, he hath saved us with a great salvation; I may say, miraculous salvation: oh, if ever people were saved in a way of free love, and with a *notwithstanding,* thus are we saved here in England.

But suppose it be so, that the Lord hath saved us with a *notwithstanding,* for his own name's sake, out of his mercy and free love: what is our duty that doth flow from hence?

If the Lord doth save us with a *notwithstanding,* for his own name's sake, out of mere grace; then, what mighty engagements are upon us all, to become gracious; to repent of, and turn from our former sins, notwithstanding which he hath saved us. An ungracious heart may possibly mourn for

sin that it may be pardoned; but an ingenuous, gracious heart, will mourn for sin because it is pardoned. Yea, and the more he apprehends that his sin is pardoned, the more he will, and doth mourn for it.

We read of David, that he had sinned greatly, and he lay long therein without testimony of repentance: at the last, he breaks out into a penitential psalm, the list, and there he melts, and breaks all to pieces in repentance. When was that psalm made? The title tells us, A Psalm of David; when Nathan the prophet came unto him, that is after Nathan the prophet had come. And what did Nathan say to him, but "thy sin is forgiven thee;" whereupon he did melt into that repentance. So now, when a person doth truly consider how many *notwithstandings* the Lord doth carry his conversion through, then he doth melt indeed, if there be ingenuousness in him. Oh, says he, I was a poor ignorant man, a drunkard, a swearer, an opposer, and a jeerer at goodness and good men; yet the Lord saved me, shewed mercy to me, notwithstanding all this: and therefore, what infinite cause have I to be humbled for sin committed; here he breaks, and melts. And if ye look into Ezra ix., ye shall find that nothing did so melt and break his heart as this, that the people sinned against the free love of God, verse 6., "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape and to give us a nail in his holy place." verse 10, "And now O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments." verse 13, "And after all that is come upon us, for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this: should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? O Lord our God, thou art righteous, for we remain yet escaped: behold we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee, because of this." So say I, hath the Lord shewed mercy to us with a *notwithstanding* all our sins; and shall we sin against him notwithstanding all his mercies; how shall we stand before him because of this? Surely, the latter end will be sad and smart. Ye read of the children of Israel's

unbelief, and that therefore they fell, and died in the wilderness: they had sinned greatly in unbelief on the other side the water, before they came through the Red Sea, but God pardoned that: but when the Lord had brought them through the Red Sea, and they had seen God saving them with a *notwithstanding*, and then fell into that unbelief, they died for it: their unbelief on this side the water, was at a dearer rate than on the other. And so it will be with us; many and great were our sins which we committed before the Lord saved us; and if yet we will go on, and will not repent of them; now they will cost us dear. The Lord hath saved us with a *notwithstanding*: oh, what a mighty engagement is this upon us all to leave those sins, notwithstanding which the Lord hath saved us?

If the Lord hath saved us with a *notwithstanding*, out of free love; then let us all walk humbly after all our deliverances, victories, salvations. Be it known unto thee, O Israel, saith the Lord, "that not for thy righteousness, not for thy uprightness, but for mine own name's sake have I done all this." So may I say to England: O England, the Lord hath done great things for thee formerly, and of late; yet, be it known unto thee, that not for thy righteousness, nor thine uprightness, but for his own name's sake hath he done it. Why should any of us then be proud, and not walk humbly under all? "My soul (says Mary) doth magnify the Lord, &c., for he that is mighty hath magnified me:" so your old service book; but it is, according to the original* "Hath done great things for me." She doth not say, as Austin observes, *Fecit in me*, or *fecit per me*, but *fecit mihi* he hath done great things, not in me, nor by me, but to me and for me, holy and reverend is his name; as for me, I am not so much an agent, as a poor patient. So may we say, The Lord hath done great things for us, nor in us, not by us, but for us and to us for his own name's sake. Oh, therefore let us all walk humbly with our God.

If the Lord hath saved us with a *notwithstanding*: then why should not we love one another with a *notwithstanding*? You say, I could love such, or such a man, but that he is of this opinion: I confess he is godly, but not of my judgment, nor of my opinion, this or that failing, or oddness of carriage

* Οτι ἐποιησε μοι μεγαλεια ὁ δυνατὸς.

he hath.* But did God love me with a *notwithstanding* all my sin; and shall not I love his children with a *notwithstanding* all their failings? ye know the parable: when the Lord forgave his servant frankly and freely, what he expected that the servant should do to his fellow servant: and because he did not, his Lord "was wroth with him." This is an everlasting rule; that when Christ loves us, he expects that we should love his, as he hath loved us. And therefore says he, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." Now he hath loved us freely, *notwithstanding* all our failings and sins; all our oddnesses and weaknesses: awake, awake, oh love of the saints, awake.

Some think the best way to unite hearts in these dividing times, is to make all things common, according to that verse, Si duo de nostris tollas prænomina rebus prolia cessarent, pax sine lite foret. Take but two pronouns, that is, *meum* and *tuum*, out of our matters, and wars will cease, and there will be peace without strife. But the statute of *meum* and *tuum* was made in heaven, and it is engraven in our nature. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his." This *his* is part of the moral law, and so in our nature. Indeed, we read that when Cain, a wicked man, came to sacrifice, that it is said, "he brought an offering of the field," in common. But when godly Abel brought a sacrifice, it is said, "he brought a firstling of his sheep;" the word of propriety being written upon his sacrifice. And surely the way to unite hearts, is not to dissolve our nature; but if you would love one another, as this doctrine calls for at our hands, let me tell you, that the way to love, is to begin in faith. As in our love to God: love is the fruit of faith, faith is the root of love: I cannot love God if I do not trust him, nor can I ever love my neighbour if I do not trust him. Away, therefore, with all designings one upon another, and let us first profess simplicity and integrity. Though I can never help you as I would, yet I will never detain you; ye cannot love if ye do not trust first. And, therefore, let us so carry it towards one another, in all simplicity and godly gospel integrity, that we

* Diversum sentire duos de rebus eisdem incolumi licuit semper amicitia.

may confide in each other. And if you would love one another much, do not expect too much from any; man is but man: "Verily every man in his best estate," and therefore though he be godly, "is altogether vanity." There is somewhat of the worst in the best, In optimo semper aliquid pessimi. Every man must have his allowance, he hath his failings. Whenever you look upon another man's infirmities, think of his other excellencies. As when you look upon your own excellency, think withal upon your other infirmity: so when you look on another man's infirmity, think withal on his other excellency. If we expect too much we are disappointed, and disappointment doth breed vexation and displeasure: if we expect little and find much, it breeds love; if we expect much and find little, it breaks love.

Again, If you would have the returns of love upon your heart, walk and be together, you that are godly. Strangeness is the next door to enmity. Strangeness doth breed suspicion, and suspicion doth breed enmity. There are some things wherein we are all agreed, let us walk together in the practice of them.* It is a vain thing for men to run up and down to get work, when much lies unmade upon their shop-boards. Now there is much on our board yet not made up, let us all work to make up that which lies on our board for the present, and by that time it is made up, through God's grace we shall be agreed in the rest. And in the mean time let every man keep his place. A learned man being asked what the reason was of the dissensions of those times wherein he lived, said, Because men do not keep their places; all men were out of their places.† I wish I might not say so too. We are out of our places; and what peace or love while men are out of their

* Nunciatum est mihi de vobis fratres ab aliquibus, qui in vestra congregatione sum et ad nos inde venerunt, quod de hac re dissentiones in vobis sunt, itaque dilectissimi ne vos perturbet hujus quæstionis obscuritas, moneo vos primum ut de his quæ intelligitis agatis Deo gratias; quicquid est autem quo pervenire nondum potest vestræ mentis intentio, pacem inter vos et charitatem servantes a domino ut intelligatis orate, et donec res ipsa perducat ad ea quæ nondum intelligitis ibi ambulate quo pervenire potuistis. Hæc etiam admonet spostolus Paulus, qui cum dixisset se nondum perfectum esse, paulo post ait, quotquot ergo perfecti sumus hoc sapiamus et si quid aliter sapitis hoc quoque Deus revelabit, verum tamen in quod pervenimus in eo ambulamus, Phil. iii. 15, 16.—Augustin. vide Cassandri tractat. de pii viri officio circa religionis desidium.

† Unde tot in rebus humanis turbæ, nisi quod fere omnes eam quam Deus

places, and do not act nor move in their own spheres? Oh, you that are scholars of Jesus Christ, away to your places, your Lord is coming, and if he find you out of your places he will take the rod into his hand.

But above all things, think of this truth much that is now before ye. Lactantius observes, that the heathens accounted it the best honouring of their gods, to be like them: and therefore some would be wicked, that they might be like to Jupiter their god:* and though it were evil which they did, yet they thought they honoured their gods in it, because they were like to them. Ye would all honour your God: labour more and more to be like to him; he hath saved, delivered and loved you with a *notwithstanding*. Oh, therefore let us love one another *notwithstanding* all our failings, and infirmities.

Ye read of Rebecca, that when she was with her servants, she rode on camels: but when she saw Isaac on foot, she did alight and walk as he did. It may be when you are with your fellow servants, you think it fit to be on horse-back, you are high and in your ruffe: but behold our Isaac, our Saviour hath condescended to our infirmities, came down, walked on foot: he hath saved us with a *notwithstanding;* and why should not all we be contented to walk, as Christ walked; and to love, as he loved? He hath loved us with a *notwithstanding*, so let us do.

If the Lord doth sometimes save his people with a *nevertheless*, out of mere love, then why should we despise, or despair of any, though they be never so vile; or envy at any, though they be never so good? Say not, says Austin, *Num quid Deus correcturus est hominem tam vilem &c.* Will God correct and convert a man so vile and so perverse? Do not despair, says he, attend whom thou prayest *to*, not *for* whom

imposuit nobis personam, nobis nolumus, et peregrinam agere desideramus; qui agere debet theologum, agere audet politicum, qui privata contentus esse umbra debet, publico apricare sole molitur: quod non minus creat in hac mundi histrionia incommodi, quam si in comœdia servus agat herum et ancilla dominum, morio regem, &c. Est via ad concordiam, quisque faciat in suo vitæ genere ad quod Deus eum vocavit suum officium. Non extollat se supra alios neque opera aliorum reprehendat, et sua velut meliora laudet, sed alii aliis per charitatem serviant.—Luther.

* Mores et vitia regis imitari genus obsequii est: abjecerunt pietatem ne exprobrare regi (Jovi) scelus viderentur. Lact.

thou prayest.* You see the disease of the patient, but not the power of the physician. And seeing God works and saves with a *notwithstanding*, who knows what he will do, whose ways are past finding out? Joseph was thrown behind for a while, and though he had a promise that his sheaf should be higher than the rest of his brethren, yet at the first it was lowest, but God took him, raised him, and made his sheaf higher than all his brethren's. So can God do by this or that wicked person: though now he stands behind, God may take him, and set him before; for God works freely. Oh, therefore, never despise any, though they be never so wicked; nor I say, envy at others, though they be never so good, for their parts, gifts, and abilities: God can take you and make you as good, or better. For the present indeed, you may bemoan yourselves, and say, Is God so good, so gracious, so free as to save with a *notwithstanding*, and am I the only wicked man or woman that shall have none of this free love; that shall not taste of this rich grace? *Si impius es*, says one, If thou art wicked, think on the publican: if unclean, think on Rahab: if injurious, think on the thief; if an idolater, think on Abraham; if a blasphemer, think on Paul: who would have thought, that should have seen Paul trudging with a persecuting commission, that he would ever have been such a famous preacher of the gospel? But the Lord, our Lord, works, delivers, saves with a *notwithstanding*; he doth work freely: therefore, despise not any, though they be never so vile: envy not any, though they be never so good.

If the Lord doth save for his own name's sake, then let us all be tender of his name: take heed that we do not wrong his name, our only friend in adversity: but if we be in any danger, labour more and more to engage his name in our work, and upon all occasions exalt this name of the Lord. Abulensis observes, that though Moses did strike other things with his rod, yet himself would not strike the waters, but spake to Aaron to strike them, when they were to be turned into blood: for, says he, Moses was preserved in the waters, and ont of thankfulness he would not strike the waters that had preserved him. I do not like his reason, but I allude: it is

* Attende quem rogas non pro quo ragas, vides periculum morbi sed non vides potentiam medici fecit reficere potest—Augustin.

the name of the Lord that hath preserved you, and shall we now strike his name? I say nothing of those that do swear by his name, their own consciences tell them, that they wound the name of God: but how few are there in these days that are tender of God's name? If a man, a professor, fall and sin, how ready are others to spread and divulge his sin? yea, though the spreading thereof be a scandal unto God's name. As Luther said in his time, *ob quodcunque erratum*, for every fault, and error, they presently cry out, These are your fruits of the gospel: so now this is the fruit of your profession and holiness.

But ye see into what times of danger we are now fallen. "The name of the Lord (says Solomon) is a strong tower, the righteous fly thereunto and are safe:" or, as some read it, lifted up. If a man be in a tower, he may not only defend himself, but offend his enemy. Abimelech and a sorry woman were too unequally matched; what was a weak woman to him? Yet, Judges ix., a woman, having the advantage of a strong tower, proved too good for him; for, from the tower she cast down a great stone upon Abimelech, brake his skull, and he died. Now such a strong tower is the name of the Lord: though you be so weak as a woman, yet if in-towered in the name of God, you shall be able to cast down millstones upon all your enemies. Who would not, therefore, engage the name of God more and more in the time of danger? And seeing for his own name's sake he hath saved you, and your fathers, and children, and families, as it is this day; come now, and let us exalt his name together.

The name of God is exalted, when ye speak highly of his power, faithfulness, mercy, free love and grace, and of all his attributes.

A man exalts his name, when he ventures upon great things, and hard things, even lions in his way, upon confidence in the name of God: as David against Goliah.

The name of God is exalted, when men yield up their resolutions and engagements, and that presently, upon the least discovery of dishonour that may come thereby to this name of God.

We exalt the name of God, when we labour to bear up those ordinances, ways and truths of God, which the world decries. There is a verbal, and there is a real exalting of

God's name; it is not the verbal but the real that God expecteth: and seeing he saveth us, and all our's hitherto, for his own name's sake, why should we not all join together in exalting his name? Oh, you that are parents, call upon your children to exalt his name; you that are governors and masters, call upon your servants to exalt his name: tell them how he hath saved us with a *notwithstanding*, for his own name's sake; and therefore exalt his name.

I shall now tell you, in the next place, that if God doth save us with a *notwithstanding*, then we should serve him with a *notwithstanding* all opposition, notwithstanding all discouragements: that we should believe and trust in him, notwithstanding all our fears and dangers. But I hasten to the next doctrine, which is this:

Secondly, When God doth save his people with a *notwithstanding*, he doth then leave such marks and characters of his infinite power upon their deliverance to salvation, that he may be fully, clearly, plainly known to the sons of men.

Ye shall observe, therefore, that when God promised any great deliverance to his people in the time of the prophets, he frequently addeth these words, "Then shall ye know that I am the Lord," or, "Then shall ye know that I am Jehovah." God's infinite and almighty power is never more seen or legible, than when he works in a way of free love. And therefore, if ye look into Numb. xiv., you find, that when Moses pleaded with God to pardon and pass by the iniquity of his people, to shew forth his grace and love to them; he doth then implore and call in the power, the great power of God; ver. 17, it is said, he made the heavens by his power, but here great power is used and expressed for the pardoning of sin. And in Ps. xcix. 8, we find that his free love and power are knit together. *Deus fortis condonans, &c.* For he is not only strong and merciful, but he is strong in mercy. So that, whensoever God doth save his people with a a *notwithstanding*, his great design is to make known his mighty power unto the sons of men.

But it will be said now, We are all convinced and persuaded, that the Lord hath saved us and ours in a way of free love, with a *notwithstanding*: but what marks or impressions of a Deity, or of infinite power, are there upon the deliverances or salvations that we have had?

It is only God himself that can turn the tide. Poor weak man may turn and divert the stream of a river, but it is only God, and the infinite power of the Almighty, that can turn the tide. When the tide comes in, we may sail up with the tide, or cast anchor: but none can turn the tide but God alone. Not long since, there was a full tide of superstition and prelatical malice coming in upon all God's people; and now of late how hath this tide been turned? Oh, the tide is turned, it is turned: this is the Lord's doing, and it may be marvellous in your eyes if it be not.

Again, when there are such great things done for God's people as the nature of the second cause will not, cannot bear; then the hand, and arm, and special power of God is, and may be seen therein, Jer. xxxi. 22, "I the Lord have created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man."* It is ordinarily understood of Christ in the womb of the virgin Mary, but, as Calvin doth well observe, (it is his comment not mine,) it is not said, that a woman shall compass a man barely, but a strong one: a woman shall compass a strong one, or one that is strong: so the Hebrew word signifies: and, says he, that word which is translated *compass*, signifies *such a compassing*, as enemies do use when they lay siege to a city. So Ps. cxviii., "They compassed me about like bees." It is the same word there which is used in a hostile way. And so the meaning is thus: though, oh, ye Israelites, ye be as weak as women, and your enemies strong, yet you shall lay siege to them, and take them captive, for I will create "a new thing."

When God works creation-wise, then he puts forth his almighty power; and when a woman, or those that are weak, shall lay siege to, and take the strong, then his creating hand is at work.

* Neque enim simpliciter propheta hic de viro loquitur, sed nominat virum robustum. גבר enim sumitur a fortitudine; cum igitur fœminam viro comparet, non dubito quia significet propheta Israelitas qui similes erant fœminis, hoc est carebant viribus, destituti erant omni auxilio, quin dicit superiores fore hostibus suis quorum potentia poterat toti mundo terrorem incutere: Nam סבב significat non amplecti sed obsidere, sæpenumero, et multis accipitur scripturæ locis in malam partem: Hostes circundederunt me, Ps. cxviii. Cum igitur notatur obsidio scriptura hoc verbum usurpat. et perinde est acsi propheta dixisset, redigent fœminæ viros in angustias, ita ut ipsos captivos teneant.—Calvin. in Jerem. xxxi. 22.

And hath it not been thus in these great deliverances that he hath wrought for us of late? We may all say, "The Lord hath created a new thing," for the woman, that is, those that are weak, have laid siege to, and taken those that are strong. Here is power legible.

Again, the Psalmist doth speak expressly, "The Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth: the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands." When the wicked plot, consult, and design upon, and against the righteous, and they are so snared in their complotments, as that the cause of the just and righteous is furthered by their own workings, then is the Lord known: *then* and *there* are the marks, impressions, characters, of a Deity upon that work. And hath not the Lord led you in this way all along?

For the powder treason: the enemies and papists thought to have swallowed up the protestant party, and to have subdued all this kingdom with their religion; promising themselves such a good day, as they never had before: but never had the papists such a blow, nor that religion made more odious in this kingdom, than by this design of their own: they were snared in their own works.

And was it not so with the prelates of late; and with all your enemies? I appeal to ye, what hath contributed to, or advanced the cause of God's people, more than the designings of their enemies? Oh, therefore who may not say, Now I have seen a Deity, now I have seen the Lord, and his mighty power?

But if there have been such marks and impressions of an almighty power upon all our deliverances and salvations; what is the reason, that men see God no more therein, God is yet known no more?

Let me tell you plainly: some men come to God's work full of their own sense. Interpretation follows the disposition. Every man interprets according to his own affection.

It is therefore observed by Masius, that when Moses and Joshua came down from the mount, and heard the people dancing, playing, and singing before their golden calf; Joshua, being of a warlike disposition, interprets the noise to be the noise of war: Moses, being a meek man, interprets the noise to be the noise of singing. I have read of a certain controversy that was at Rome, concerning the two

missals or services of Gregory and Ambrose: the controversy was very hot, whose missal or mass-book should be allowed, and authentic: and thereupon they determined, that they should both be left upon the altar in Peter's church all the night; and that they would expect some immediate revelation from heaven the next morning: it was so done, both were left on the altar; and in the morning, they found that Gregory's mass-book was rent, and torn in many pieces, and lay scattered about the church: but Ambrose's whole, and open upon the altar. Which event, says my author, one would have thought, should have signified thus much, that the missal of Gregory should have been cancelled and abolished; and that of Ambrose authentic and canonical: but Pope Adrian, in whose time it was, being for Gregory's mass-book, expounded this lying miracle thus: that the rending of Gregory's missal, intended the dispersing thereof over all the christian world, and that it only should be made authentic. Thus do men's interpretations follow their own dispositions. And so now, when men come to God's works, deliverances, and salvations, though there be much of a Deity therein, yet coming to them in their own sense, and abounding in their affection, they follow their own disposition, and so they lose the Deity.

But when Moses came to see the wonder of "the burning bush, that was not consumed;" though he said, "I will turn aside to see this great wonder;" the Lord said, "Pull off thy shoes, Moses, pull off thy shoes." So doth God now call unto us: you say, I will turn aside, and see this wonder, that England's bush hath been burning thus many years, and is not consumed; a wonder indeed, to be beheld and considered by all: but if you would see the Lord therein, ye must pull off your own shoes; and the Lord calls unto ye, Oh, my servants, pull off your shoes; lay aside your own dispositions, else you will not see this wonder, nor my power.

Sometimes men come to God's work with their hearts full of envy and malice at God's instruments: and envy is blind.* They will not see, says envy, in a case of justice, but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at thy

* Ira sequintur invidiam, quæ mentem exulcerat, sensum hebetat, linguam immutat, oculos obumbrat, totumque corpus perterbat.—Ambrose.

people. If a man have an envious, malicious eye at God's instruments, he will never see much of God in the work.

Though there be much of God's power and glory in all those salvations which he hath wrought for us with a *notwithstanding*: yet sometimes men see not God, because they stand poring so much on the second cause. God seldom doth any great work, but still he doth use some creature in the doing of it, though the creature be too short to reach the work. And though it be but a piece of brass, which, say the naturalists, to behold is hurtful to those that are stung with the serpent: yet the Israelites will rather adore the brazen serpent, than they would see the Lord.

The Jewish Rabbins say, that when the Philistines had taken Samson,* and saw that he was a man of such strength, none like him in all the earth; they caused him to sleep with some women, that they might have a generation of Samsons, and strong men among them: and the reason of this notion they take from Judges xvi. 21, where it is said, That they made him him *grind,* not in the mill, but they made him *grind.* Which word is the same in the Hebrew, with that in Job xxxi., "Then let my wife *grind* to another." And if this notion of theirs be true: ye see how the Philistines lost the sight of God in the strength of Samson; namely, by poring too much on the second cause of strength. But when our Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, what great and glorious things did he do, yet the Jews had not an eye to see them, or God in them: why? "Is not this the carpenter's son?" say they. "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" They looked no higher than Nazareth, or a carpenter. There was flesh in Christ, and a Deity: they looked so much upon his flesh, as they did lose his Deity. So in all these great things that God hath done for us; there is a flesh in the work, something of flesh; and there is a Deity, the impressions of infinite power: but men stand looking so much upon the flesh of the action, as they lose the Deity of it. Some stretch and crack their eye-strings so much in beholding the creatures, and in the admiration of men; as they have no eye left for to see the Lord: sometimes men see no

* Ebræi tamen dicunt quod Philistæi fecerunt cum dormire cum mulieribus robustis ut ex eo prolem robustam susciperent: quoniam idem vocabul: Judges xvi. 21. טוחו et Job xxxi. חטחו Dilherus. Elect. lib. ii. cap. ix.

more of God in his works because they are not acquainted with his ways and methods of his proceedings with his people; his way is in the deep, and therefore his footsteps are not known; we seek for him in our own way, and find him not; for his ways are not as our ways: whereupon says Luther,* If we would see more of God in his works, we must understand his ways as distinct from ours. *Nam ego*, saith he, I often endeavoured to prescribe God his way which he should walk in. O Lord, said I, this I would have thus done, in this order, and with this event: but God did the contrary unto what I desired: then did I think but my counsel was for God's glory, and did make to the sanctifying of his name; *sed risit dominus*, the Lord laughed at my wisdom, saying, I know thou art a wise man, and learned; but it is not my manner to do, or work, or govern, as Peter Martyr, Luther, or any other shall teach; for I am not a passive but an active God: *sciamus ergo*, we must know therefore, that God doth sometimes hide himself, that we may learn that his goodness, mercy, power, is not to be attained by speculation, but experience. The way to see him in his work is to understand his method in working, which nothing can attain unto, but faith: "all men have not faith, few that do live by faith." Sometimes men are so discontented with what is evil amongst us, that for anguish of their souls, they cannot see what is good: some crumb goes awry, and so they lose the whole meal of mercy. But would you have a true prospect of the great things God hath done for us? then let us all go, and run unto Jesus Christ, to open the mystery and parable of

* Discamus regulam et ordinem gubernationis Dee usitatum, nam ego sæpe certas rationes conatus sum Deo præscribere, quibus uteretur in administratione sanctæ ecclesiæ et aliarum rerum; ab Domine, dixi, hoc velim ita fieri, hoc eventu; sed Deus prorsus contrarium faciebat ab eo quod petiveram: ibitum cogitabam, atqui meum consilium non est alicuum a gloria Dei, sed plurimum facit ad sanctificandum nomen ejus: sed risit haud dubie dominus hanc sapientiam et dixit, age vero novi te esse prudentem et eruditum, sed mihi nunquam hic mos fuit ut aut Petrus, aut Divus Martinus, aut alius me doceret: non sum Deus passivus, sed activus. Sciamus Deum se abscondere sub specie pessimi Diaboli, ideo ut discamus bonitatem, misericordiam, potentiam Dei non posse comprehendi speculando, sed experiendo. Deus suos humiliat ut exaltet, occidit ut vivificet, confundit ut glorificet, subjicit ut extollat. Nam sic Deus sapientiam nostram mortificat, ut homo agrestis mirabilem symphoniam tot vocum in organis, aut Cythara non intelligit, propterea quod totius harmoniæ rationem ignorat: sic nos arbitramur temere omnia fieri, diabolum vigilare, Deum dormire, &c.—Luther in Gen.

his works; he is the Lord that is now at work. And as when he lived, without a parable spake he nothing, so now without a parable works he nothing: his works are all parabolical as his words are.

We read, that when John, in Rev. v., met with a sealed book that had seven seals, which neither he nor any could open, he fell down and wept; but one came to him and told him, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah is worthy to open the book;" and so he was fully quieted, praising the Lord. Now there is a great folio book of providence that is before you; indeed it is sealed with many seals, but if opened, you will find that it is written in every page, Free grace, free love, salvation with a *notwithstanding*. Would you open this book? away then to Jesus Christ, and as the disciples said, so do you also, "Lord, tell us the meaning of this parable;" tell us the meaning of this dispensation; oh, tell us the meaning of this thy providence. Christ is very ready to teach you: as a schoolmaster morning by morning teacheth his scholars, so Christ, Isa. l. 4. And all the worst he will say to you, as to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not *now*, but thou shalt know."

But suppose we have seen the Lord already, the finger, hand, arm, and almighty power of God; for we must all needs acknowledge "that the Lord hath done great things for us;" that we have seen the marks and characters of his almighty power imprinted upon all our deliverances, upon the deliverance of this day, and upon all those salvations which this age hath brought forth: but then what is our work, and what returns are we to make unto God again?

Discovery of power calls for fear: it must be the song of these latter times, "Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, who shall not fear thee, and worship thy name?" Rev. xv.

But if God hath done great things for us, then are we to do some great thing for God again. God never did any great thing for his servants but they did great things for him, so David, Paul, Zaccheus, and many others. And because Hezekiah did not make answerable return of praise, though he did praise the Lord for his deliverance, God was displeased with him, and it cost him dear. Now God hath done great things for us, and made known his infinite power in a way of

free love to us, what great thing shall we do for God; yea, what great thing shall we not do for God?

Let us fix here a little.

It is in these working busy times a great thing to sit still and be contented to be without work, to be laid by, and to be used no more. God hath his times for men: he uses one to-day and another to-morrow. If a man be used in one service once, he thinks he must be used in all things and always; and when God lays him by and takes another, then, like the elder brother in the parable, he murmurs, and envies at the younger brother that is called home to God's work. It is an hard thing for one that hath been used, to be contented to be used no more. Oh, that magistrates, ministers, men of service could but be willing to be used no more, and to be laid aside if God will have it so. A man is never more fit for service than when he is willing to be used no more in service.

Again, Simplicity and plainness in God's work is a great matter in these designing times: those come nearest to God that are the most simple, and without folds and doubles, for divine nature is simplicity itself.

A great thing it is now to do God's work quickly and with despatch; to shew mercy readily, and to do justice speedily, without delay. There may be and is as much of God's power seen in the lesser creatures, as in the pismire, worm and the like, as in the great bodies of the sun and moon; because, though the pismire be little, yet there is life in that, and none in the sun or moon. Now when justice is executed speedily, and mercy dispensed quickly, there is life in it. Let beer or wine stand awhile, or till the morning, and though it were never so good when it was drawn, yet after standing it grows flat and dead. So do justice, equity and mercy too. Let mercy, equity or justice be delayed, and stand awhile, and then, though never so good in themselves, yet they are flat and dead; quickly dispensed and executed hath life.

Wherefore, right honourable, if you would do any great thing for God, look over your laws and ordinances of justice, equity and mercy, and consider what there is that clogs the speedy execution thereof: take off the clogs. It may be some half ordinance against Sabbath-sportings, drunkenness and swearing may lie before you; oh, that there may be more

despatch, more despatch, this will put life into all your works, and make them great, though otherwise small in your own eyes.

Again, It is a great matter for a man to know his time and tide of working. There is a time for all things under the sun; and because men know not their time and judgment, therefore their evil is great upon them, says Solomon.* But if men could take the tide of providence, how easily might they carry up a great burden; whereas losing their tide, and rowing against the streams of providence, things come off heavily and with much difficulty.

When a man is at sea in a vessel, he must not go where he will, but as the wind and tide carries him. Ye are now embarked in a great work and service; ye may not, ye cannot go where and when you will; sometimes ye must lie becalmed. But oh, that men did know the gale of providence, the time and tide of providence. But though we have often come up against tide, and come down with the tide, yet how few do know the time and tide of providence; how many heats of own our hearts have we lost! Would you, therefore, do any great thing for God? take your time and tide, and improve those heats of your hearts when providence warms them. This will be your wisdom, and thus shall you be great and do great things in the eyes of heaven and earth.

Again, It is no great matter now for a man to spread the gospel into all the parts of this kingdom, and dominion of Wales, if men had an heart for it; and oh that they had a heart to do it: but to spread the gospel into all the parts of the world is something. Thus the Jesuits, thus the papists do in regard of their gospel. Why should not we be as active for good as they are for evil? you have a better master and you shall have better wages. When shall the blessing of the poor Indian come upon our English parliament? This would be a great thing: let encouragement be given this way.

It is no great matter for a man to do that which is right

* Tale ingenium erat laudatissimi principis Frederici Saxoniæ ducis Electoris. Is erat vir vere industrius, qui non dicebat, non faciebat omnia quæ poterat in præsens dicere et facere; sed expectabat tempus, personam, locum commodum, dissimulabat omnia, suo autem tempore et loco, uno verbo plus efficiebat quam multi alii sine hac industria potentia et viribus summis, &c., quare adhibenda est etiam oratio ut Deus ad sit.—Luther in Gen.

and good, yea, to do it exactly; but to walk exactly in a crowd and throng of business, this is somewhat.

It is no great matter for to be godly in a godly place; but to be godly in an ungodly place, in the midst of those that are most ungodly, this is somewhat.

It is no great matter for a man to be the same for God in the same condition; but to have a sameness of heart for God in variety of conditions, this is somewhat.

It is no great matter to be thankful, rejoice, and love God in prosperity; but to fear God in prosperity, and to love God in adversity; to bless God when he takes away from us, and to be "in all things thankful," as the apostle speaks, is something.

It is no great matter for a man to pray morning and evening, thinking no more of God all the day after; but to be heavenly in all our earthly employments throughout the day, and in all our dealings with man, still to deal with God, living to God and in God, this is somewhat.

It is no great matter to do well and hear well; but to do well and hear ill, for a man to do great things for God and think himself nothing, to believe in the dark, to see through natural impossibilities, and to trust in God for life in a business when the sentence of death is upon second causes; this is a great matter.*

Many other great things that I might lay before ye, but I should be too long. God hath done great things for us: a thankful heart says, What shall I return unto the Lord for all his benefits? and the answer is, Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: great is the Lord, and greatly to be served: he hath done great things for us, we must do great things for him: small things now will not serve our turn.

Again, if the Lord hath made bare his holy arm for your deliverance, if he hath saved you with a great salvation, as it is this day: you, and your fathers, and children from the hand of Rome, and of the papists; then why should you not all prejudice your hearts against that religion that was the mother of such a bloody design as the powder treason was? The papists said indeed. when their plot miscarried, that it was but the work of some few unfortunate gentlemen. Aye,

* Magnum est, magna facere et teipsum putare nihil.—Eusebius Nieremb.

and blessed be the Lord they were so unfortunate. But had the plot fired, and taken, then the execution thereof would have been painted in the Pope's palace: as I have read the massacre of Paris was, *in perpetuam rei memoriam.* But if their religion * itself do carry such principles in the bosom of it as do naturally breed and lead to such practises, then it cannot be said that this was only the design of a few unfortunate gentlemen. Now what are the principles of that religion? the papists themselves say, that what a Pope determines in a council, or general council, is *de fide:* ask therefore the Lateran council, and Concilium Lugdunense, ask Aquinas, Bellarmine, Suarez, Tollet, Sa, Mariana, Tannerus, and Becanus, they will tell you, that infidelical, heretical, apostatizing princes and governors are to be deposed

* Si vero dominus temporalis requisitus et monitus ab ecclesia, terram suam purgare neglexerit ab hac hæretica fæditate, per metropolitanum et cæteros episcopos excommunicationis vinculo innodetur; et si satisfacere contempserit intra annum, significetur hoc summo Pontifici ut ex tunc ipse vassallos ab ejus fidelitate absolutus denunciet et terram exponat Catholicis occipandam, qui eam exterminatis hæreticis sine ulla contradictione possideant. E decretis Concilii Generalis Lateranensis tempore Innocentii Papæ iii. de fide Cathol. cap. iii. Binius. Omnesque qui ei (Imperatori scil.) juramento fidelitatis aliquo modo tenentur astricti, vel obligati, a juramento hujusmodo perpetuo absolvimus et liberamus, auctoritate apostolica firmiter et stricte inhibendo ne quisquam de cætero ei tanquam imperatori vel regi pareat; decernendo quoslibet qui deincepa ei velut imperatori vel regi consilium, vel auxilium prestiterint, seu fautorem ipso facto excommunicationis vinculo subjacere. Concil. Lugdun. xiii. œcumenic. approbatum centum et quadraginta episcoporum, causa Frederici ii. imperat. deponendi celebratum, 1245. Bin. vide plura apud Mat. Paris: cum depositione, et submissione Joannes Regis Anglicani. Principibus apostatantibus a fide non est obediendum, et ideo cum cito aliquis per sententiam denunciatur excommunicatus propter apostasiam a fide, ipso facto ejus subditi sunt absoluti a dominio ejus et juramento fidelitatis, Thom. Aquin. 22. quæst. 12. art. 2. et quest. 10. art. 10. Non licet christianis tolerare regem infidelem hæreticum si ille conetur pertrahere subditos ad suam hæresim vel infidelitatem, tenentur christiani non pati super se regem non christianum, si ille conetur avertere populum a fide. Bellarm. de Roman. pontif. lib. v. cap. vii. Possumus veritatem hanc authoritate et praxi ecclesiæ ostendere, et post varia exempla addit, at vero hæc omnia. et similia non temere nec in angulo, sed aliqua ex illis in conciliis frequentissimus, aliquando in General. Ergo incredibile est fuisse actus usurpatæ, et non veræ authoritatis. Suarez. lib. iii. de Rom. pontif. cap. xxiii., xxiv. quænam sunt apostatarum et hæreticorum pœnæ? privatio politicæ potestatis juxta Canonem nos Sanctorum et can. juratos 15. q. 6. et extravagantem Martini v. ad evitanda; septima pœna est pœna corporis, viz. incarceratio exillium, mors. Tannerus de fide, disput. i. quæst. viii. dub. 6. Tom. 3. in Thom. Aquinat. Em. Sa in voce, Tyrannus. Mariana. lib. 6. de reg. c. vi p. 59

and excommunicated by the Pope. 2. That being so sentenced, their subjects are absolved and freed from the oath of fidelity and allegiance. 3. That excommunicated persons, being heretics, *cujuscunque ordinis*, are to be deprived of their estates, jurisdictions, yea, their lives; *heretici sunt comburendi.* And though this powder treason were the design of some unfortunate gentleman, yet I dare challenge all the Jesuits in the world, to shew such a practice designed by any unfortunate gentlemen of the protestant party.

Or is this the only bloody practice of the papists and Jesuits; or is this the only evil of that religion? Truly as things lie in my apprehension, this religion, this Bellarminian religion destroys the whole law and gospel; the law, and the ten commandments.

It destroys the first commandment: for they worship a piece of bread for God, with the worship of God.

It destroys the second: witness their many images.

It destroys the third: taking God's name in vain, by praying and worshipping in an unknown tongue.

It destroys the fourth, by denying the morality of the sabbath.

It destroys the fifth; for if a man or woman get into a cloister, and say, *Corban*, it is a gift, they are no more bound to obey their parents.

It destroys the sixth commandment; for they murder princes and magistrates, witness this day and the principles of this action.

It destroys the seventh; for they say single fornication is no sin, or venial.

It destroys the eighth; for it hath stolen away the cup in the Lord's supper from the people, and the Scriptures from them too.

It destroys the ninth: for they bear false witness of the fathers and ancient writers, making them say what they never did, to bear up their own cause; and of godly Luther, Calvin, Beza and others, affirming that they did and died, as they did not and died not.

It destroys the tenth commandment: for they say concupiscence is no sin, and that original sin is *peccatum minus*

minimo, less than the least. I know nothing less than the least, but nothing.

It destroys the gospel, setting up a covenant of works. The comfort and sweetness of the gospel hangs on the priestly office of Christ, which consists in his satisfaction for sin and intercession. This religion tells us of other satisfactions than that of Christ, and other mediators and intercessors, as saints and angels.

It destroys your faith; for it holds doubtings, and that a man cannot be ordinarily assured of his salvation.*

It destroys your repentance, by extenuation of sin, the great sin of our nature, and giving a babel penance for true repentance.†

It destroys your obedience by the ingrediency of merits.

It destroys the whole law of God and Scripture, by making it a nose of wax, and insufficient rule for us to live by, without their own traditions.‡

It destroys the laws of man too; for what is the law of England, but the parliament? The law is a dead parliament, and the parliament is a living law. You have now time to dispute your liberty of subjects, privilege of parliament, and royal prerogative; but had this design taken, in what woful confusion had all been wrapt up together!

It may be you say, So they are now.

But, unthankful heart, it had been worse then, infinitely worse then. Then might the poor countryman have come up and seen an heap of blood, flesh, and stones together; and after long scraping in that heap, possibly might have found the head of their knight and burgess, saying, Here is the head of our dear knight and burgess, but where are his arms, where his legs?

Then might the wife and children have done the like, and said, Here, oh, here is my husband's head, but where is his body; my father's head, but where is his body? Then might you have heard, not Rachel mourning for her children, but all the children of this land mourning for their fathers, and not comforted, because they were not. You will mourn, and

* Concil. Trident. Sess. 6, c. 9, 12.

† Quicunque peccatum originis extenuant, doctrinam de pœnitentia depravant. —Gerard.

‡ Vide Gerardi Disputation. Theolog. l. 2, ubi de hisce omnibus agitur fusius.

lament, and weep sometime, at the execution of a malefactor, and say, What pity is it, that such a man as this should die; though he were thus and thus faulty in this matter, yet otherwise a valiant man, a wise man, a brave man: what pity is it that his head should thus be stricken off at one blow! But here the head of England should have been stricken off at one blow, and not a malefactor executed, but our judges themselves, under the stroke of injustice, tumbling in their gore. Oh, unparalleled cruelty! I know nothing beyond it, but hell itself. Speak, O sun, whether in all thy travels from one end of the heavens to the other, thou hast ever beheld such a practice as this? Yet this design, this black, cruel, hellish design hath this jesuitical religion brought forth, as it is this day.

But I say no more; ye know what the northern gentleman said: I cannot dispute, but I have two arguments against the papists that can never be answered, equivocation and the powder treason: and this may all you say that cannot dispute. Who would not prejudice his own heart, his children's, his servants' hearts against this religion? Oh, for ever take heed of tampering with this religion.

I fear the hand of the Jesuit is too much among us at this day; but, O England, O parliament, for ever remember the fifth of November: "The snare is broken, and we are delivered."

And so I come to the next duty, which upon the account of God's gracious and powerful deliverance, we are to return unto God; namely, "To praise him, and speak well of his name."

"The Lord hath saved us, and made his mighty power known in the midst of us: oh be thankful unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever." We read in Psalm cxxvi., that when the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, it is said, the church "was like unto those that are restored to health." The words run thus: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like unto them that dream." But the words should rather be translated, "We are like unto those that are restored to health." The Hebrew word signifies,* to recover, or, to be restored to

* חלם incolumis, sanus, sanatus, reviluit, convaluit, sic Ps. cxxvl., fuimus כחלמים sicut convalescentes, Targum: sicut ægroti, qui sanati sunt, ut captivi-

health. And so the same word is translated in Isa. xxxviii., when Hezekiah recovered, he made a psalm of praise, and said, "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live." It is the same word that is used here. Thus Cajetan, Shindler, and others would have it translated here; and it suits best with the following words, "Then were our mouths filled with laughter, and our tongues with praise." When a man is in a good dream, his mouth is not filled with laughter, nor his tongue with praise; if a man be in a bad dream, his mouth is not filled with laughter, nor his tongue with praise: but when a man is restored to health after a great sickness, it is so. And therefore, says the psalmist, "When the Lord turned our captivity," &c. Now if you look into Scripture, you will find, that the word *captivity* is used for any violence that is done by others upon God's people. So it is said of Job when he prayed for his friends. He was never from his own house in all his affliction, how then in captivity? he was under violence, for the present put into the hands of Satan, and so in captivity. When God's people are under violence, then in scripture phrase they are said to be in captivity. Ye have also been under the violence of men: in queen Mary's days, under the violence of papists; in later days, under the violence of prelates; and now of late, the parliament under the violence of the rout; and the godly of the city under violence too. But the Lord having freed you from this violence, he hath turned your captivity, even as the waters of the south: and therefore, why should not all we be as those that are restored to health again? When a man is restored to health, then he praises the Lord, and rejoices in all his goodnesses: yea, he will praise the Lord for less strength and health than before, for that which he did not praise God before.

Wherefore now then, though we do not keep this day as an holy-day, "Let our mouths be filled with laughter, and our tongues with praises. Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he

tas morbo et sanationi liberatio comparetur. Sept. ὡς παρακεκλημένοι sicut consolati. Alii sicut somniantes, ex significatione secunda, Shind. p. 582, fuimus sicut convalescentes, veram esse hanc prophetiam res postea gesta testatur, quoniam similes ex agritudine convalescentibus fuerunt redeuntes ex captivitate Babyloniæ, paulatim enim auctæ sunt vires eorum.—Cajetan in Ps. cxxv.

is good, for his mercy endures for ever. He hath scattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts: for his mercy endures for ever." He hath saved us with a *notwithstanding:* for his mercy endures for ever. He hath not only delivered us from one powder treason, but from many, in these late years: for his mercy endures for ever.

Oh, you right honourable, the House of Peers, "Praise ye the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever."

And you, most honourable, the House of Commons, "Praise ye the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever."

And let all the household of the faithful, "Praise the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever. Oh, give thanks unto the God of gods, for his mercy endures for ever." We sinned, God saved us; we sinned greatly, he hath saved us with a great salvation, with a *nevertheless:* "Nevertheless he hath saved us, for his own name's sake, that he might make his mighty power known." Now then, let us all praise the Lord, and call upon his name.

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST'S COMING IS AT OUR MIDNIGHT.

PREACHED AT WESTMINSTER, BEFORE THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 17, 1648,

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR THANKSGIVING FOR THE GREAT VICTORY IN WALES.

TO THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED AT WESTMINSTER.

ACCORDING to your command I have presented these notes to your view, somewhat concerning the kingdom and coming of Christ; an argument as unwelcome to some as welcome to others. Kings, princes and rulers sometimes startle at it, but they need not, for Christ means them no hurt; if they will throw down their crowns at his feet, he will set their crowns on their heads and his own too. The Jews feared and refused to receive Christ and his kingdom, lest they should lose their own kingdom; and thereby they lost both their God and their kingdom, as Austin observes. But who ever lost his sceptre by submitting unto Christ's sceptre? I may say, truly, *potestus Christi* is rather *cumulativa* than *privitiva*. In helping Christ to his throne, you shall help yourselves to your honours and greatness. I will not say that Christ hath need of you, he hath no need of us: but if that of the schools be true, namely, that one is helped by another, either by addition of new strength and virtue, or by the exercise of what was formerly given; then Jesus Christ may in some sense, and that according to scripture phrase, Judges v. 23, be said to be helped by you. Great confederacies will be raised against him when he comes to his kingdom, Psalm ii. 1, 2. But God, who sits in heaven, laughs at those combinations, verse 4, and in spite of them will set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, verse 6. And to him that overcometh will I give to sit down with me in my throne, saith our Saviour, even as I have overcome and sit with my Father in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. Wherefore, most honourable, be not overcome with evil, be not overcome with difficulties, with oppositions or combinations of men; but overcome evil with good, and do what in you lies to bring this blessed King Jesus unto his throne and inheritance that as the earth in due time shall, so England in special manner may become the kingdom of our Lord Christ, and we may all say, The Lord God omnipotent reigneth amongst us.

I could not long deliberate in so short a time what part of God's word I should preach to you, but knowing the trouble of these times, and that the more you spend your thoughts on Christ's coming and kingdom, the more your hearts will be upheld in the times of your troubles; I chose rather to preach on this argument, which I here now present, and beseech the Lord to bless it to you, and you to this kingdom; only be strong, and be of good courage; fear not, neither be

dismayed; and the Lord your God will be with you as he hath been formerly, which shall be the prayer of,

Your humble servant in the gospel of Jesus Christ,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh."—MATT. XXV. 6.

IN this parable ye have the state and posture of the church a little before and at the coming of Jesus Christ. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins," verse 1. Sometimes the doctrine and grace of the gospel is called the kingdom of heaven; "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed," &c. This cannot be meant here: because in the gospel there are not ten virgins. Sometimes the state of glory above is called the kingdom of heaven: that is not meant here, because there are no foolish virgins. Sometimes the church of Christ under the new testament is called the kingdom of heaven, for there God appears, manifests himself, and it is heaven on earth; and this is that which is here called the kingdom of heaven; which kingdom is described by the Governor, King and Head thereof, and by the subjects of that kingdom. The subjects are described by their agreement and disagreement. First, They agree in this, that they are all virgins; though some foolish, yet virgins, not defiled with men or the pollutions of the world: it is possible a foolish and unsound heart may go thus far in religion, to be free from the pollutions of the world, yea, through the knowledge of Christ, says the apostle Peter. Secondly, They agree in this, that they have all their lamps, good and bad, wise and foolish, under ordinances, which are the lamps, whereby the golden oil of the sanctuary is emptied into our hearts. Thirdly, They agree in this, that they are all expectants, wise and foolish wait the Bridegroom's coming; they all think to receive good, and have a good day by the coming of Jesus Christ: this is far, yet thus far may a foolish virgin go. Fourthly, They all agree in this, that they had oil in their lamps; indeed it is said, verse 3, that "the foolish virgins took no oil with them," but they say, verse 8, "Our lamps are gone out;"* so that oil they had once, but

* Ad nihilum valet quod non valet ad finem suum.

they had not enough, and so none; parts and gifts and common graces a man may have, not only his lamp, but some oil in it for a time, yet be a foolish virgin. Fifthly, They agree in this, that they keep company, have communion and fellowship together in the church, yea, so far that the foolish are not known till Christ's coming; so smoothly may a foolish virgin carry it, yet remain foolish. Sixthly, They all agree in this, also, that they hold out their profession with lamps, and waiting until the Bridegroom comes. So that possibly a man may be a professor of the gospel, and bear up his profession among the best, even to the last, yet be unsound at heart, and a foolish virgin. Thus far they agree.

But though these virgins agree in many things, yet they disagree in point of wisdom; for the wise got so much oil as did serve till the last, the foolish not so; there was *defectus olei*, verse 8.

Again, You have here the description of the King, Governor and Head of this kingdom, who is described from and by the manner of his coming. First, He comes as a Bridegroom. Secondly, He comes apparently: not as in the days of his flesh, when he came more hiddenly; "Behold a great cry," &c. Thirdly, He comes suddenly, unexpectedly, in the most dark time, he comes at midnight.

Now Christ's coming is either spiritual and invisible, John xiv. 18, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you;" or visible; and that either at the day of judgment, or else at the calling and conversion of the Jews, when he will appear in the clouds, and come to set up his kingdom in this world in a more glorious manner than ever. So Rev. xvii., "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him (that is the Jews); and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, even so, Amen;" which relates unto Zech. xii. 10—14, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his own son, &c. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, and the land shall mourn, every family apart: the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the

house of Levi apart, and their wives apart," &c.; which cannot be understood of the day of judgment, because then the families of David, Nathan, Shimei, Levi, shall not mourn apart, and their wives apart. Of this coming of Christ to set up his kingdom, I rather take this parable to be understood, and not of his coming at the day of judgment; for in Matt. xiv. the disciples did propound three questions to our Saviour Christ: verse 3, "Tell us, when shall these things be?" that is, the destruction of the temple; "and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" To the last he doth answer first, as is usual in Scripture, negatively: verse 6, "Ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, but the end is not yet." Affirmatively, verse 14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come." To the first question he doth answer in the second place, verses 15, 16, and to the second he doth answer in the third and last place, because he intended to speak most of that, and so proceeds to speak of his coming, and the signs thereof, in the after part of the xxivth chapter, verses 37—50, and so he goes on in this beginning of the xxvth: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like unto ten virgins." In which parable still he speaks of his coming as before, for, verse 13, he concludes this parable thus, "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."

Besides, Christ comes not as a Bridegroom but as a Judge at the day of judgment. And if ye look into Rev. xix., xxi., and xxii., where mention is made of the glory of Christ's kingdom in the latter times, ye find that the converting Jew, who there sings the Hebrew song, Hallelujah! is called the bride, the Lamb's wife, saying, "Come, Lord Jesus." And at chapter xix. 18, 19, mention is made of a great battle: but there is no fighting or battling at the day of judgment. That is no time for feasting, nor suppers neither; but at weddings and marriages there were and are great suppers, which we read shall be at this time, verse 17. And as the wise enter, so the foolish, and those that tell and make lies, are shut out. Finding therefore all these things at that coming of Christ, thus to suit with this parable, I rather incline to think, that it cannot be understood of the day of judgment, but of that time when Christ will appear at the Jews' conversion, to set

up his kingdom on earth, in that glorious and blessed manner which all the prophets bear witness unto.

And because all the victories and deliverances that Christ worketh for the churches in the meantime, are so many steps unto this kingdom and coming of his: therefore, in scripture phrase, sometimes they are called his coming. Matt. xvii. His transfiguration was called his coming in his kingdom, for chap. xvi. 28, Christ saith, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." And then, chap. xvii. 1, it is said, "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them." In three gospels the history of the transfiguration is linked unto that speech: "There are some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom," with those words, "And after six days Jesus took Peter," &c. Our Lord and Saviour Christ was then come when he spake those words, but he was to come in a more glorious way and manner to set up his kingdom; and his transfiguration being a taste of that glory and coming, it is here called his coming in his kingdom. So all these great deliverances and victories which Christ worketh for his church, being so many tastes and forerunners of his coming in his kingdom, they may be called his coming too: surely they are as so many steps that he takes in the way of his coming to his kingdom.

But, says the text, he comes at midnight; that is, in a time when he is least expected, suddenly, and when we are most in the dark. And so the observation is this:

Christ comes at midnight: though his coming be most expected, yet he will come in a time when he is least expected: when he comes as a Bridegroom, he comes at midnight, in a time when he is least expected, in the darkest time; Christ comes at midnight.

"Behold (says Christ) I come as a thief:" thieves come in the darkest time, a time when they are least expected; so will Christ's coming be.

For the opening and clearing of which truth, I shall labour to shew,

First, That our Lord and Saviour Christ will come again.

Secondly, That he will come at midnight.

Thirdly, Give you some account why he chooses rather thus to come at midnight, than otherwise.

And then draw down this by way of application to our present occasion.

First, Our Lord and Saviour Christ will come again.

Take his coming for his spiritual coming, and though now absent from your souls, yet he will come again. "If any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him," John xiv. 25.

Take his coming, for his personal, visible coming at the day of judgment, so he will come again, 2 Thess. i. 7—10.

Take his coming for his appearing in the clouds, when he will come to set up his kingdom, so he will come again before that great day: for if ye look into the Scripture, ye shall find that his coming and his kingdom are knit together, do synchronnize. Dan. vii. 13, 14.

So in many scriptures ye shall find that his coming and his kingdom do go together. Now if ye look into Rev. xi., we shall find it spoken of times yet to come: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," ver. 15. "And we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned," ver. 17: which cannot be understood of the day of judgment, for then the nations are not angry, then the temple door is not opened, as is here said, ver. 18, 19.

I would not be mistaken here; for I do not think that Christ shall come and reign, continue reigning upon earth a thousand years: I do not see how the saints can spare him out of heaven so long. Neither do I think that this his coming is only to be understood of a spiritual coming into the souls of his, so filling their souls with his Spirit, that they shall have need of ordinances no more; for in those glorious times, though there shall be no temple, that is, a Jewish temple, yet the temple door, that is, the gospel temple, shall be opened. And in Zech. xiv. which is plainly spoken of the glory of the latter times yet to come, it is said expressly three times in that chapter, that men shall go up to keep the feasts of tabernacles, an allusion to the Jewish ordinance. But why not the feast of pasaover and pentecost, only the feasts of tabernacles? Many reasons may be given, but I

think one is, because the feast of tabernacles had been more neglected than other feasts; for upon the coming out of Babylon, in Neh. viii. it is said, they had not kept that feast from the time of Joshua the son of Nun to that day, which was almost a thousand years. Now the Holy Ghost seeing what degenerations there would be in our latter times, and losings and neglectings of ordinances, he saith here, that then they shall keep the feast of tabernacles: that is, in the expression of the Jews, observe those ordinances especially, which had been most defaced and forgotten. But I keep to the words of Scripture.

Christ shall come in the clouds again, when the poor Jews shall see him, and those which are called, Forsaken, shall be called, Beloved, the King's bride; when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, when Christ himself shall set up his kingdom in the world, his *regnum potentiæ*, not *patientiæ*, when he shall rule from sea to sea, when he shall come, not riding upon an ass' colt, but in the clouds, with thousands of angels ministering unto him. When foolish virgins shall be shut out from his glory, and the wise professor taken in. And in the meanwhile, though our Lord and Saviour Christ seem to forsake the churches for the present, yet he will come again unto them with delivering and conquering mercy: "Behold, I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast," Rev. iii.*

But how may it appear that Christ will come at midnight?

I shall give you a taste of it in all his comings, because there is the same Spirit in one as in another.

For his spiritual coming. When Christ comes first with his converting grace, and causes his converting mercy to pass upon any soul, then he doth come at midnight. "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceives it not; in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, in slumberings upon the bed: then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction," Job xxxiii. 14, 15, 16. When a man is fast asleep in his sins, little thinks of any good, unless it be to oppose it, then Christ comes and seals

* Read 2 Esdras xiii. which though it be apocryphal, and the lowest of the Apocrypha, being written in Latin, yet of great antiquity, cited by Cyprian, Jerome, Austin, Clemens Alexandrinus, and divers others.

on some instruction upon his soul. Thus he doth come at midnight.

Again, When Christ comes with his comforting mercy, and causes his comforting grace to pass upon a man's heart, then he doth come at midnight, in an hour and time when he doth least expect him. "I sought him (says the spouse) but I found him not. I sought him on my bed (in private), and found him not. I sought him in the streets (in the public ordinances), but I found him not. It was but a little that I passed from the watchmen, but I found him whom my soul loveth." Then and there she finds him, where she looked not for him, and did not expect him. Ps. xlii. 6, 7, 8, says David, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." Here is trouble, sorrow and heaviness. "All thy waves have gone over me," ver. 7. Here is more. Yet, saith he, ver. 8, "The Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his songs shall be with me." It is God's ordinary title, "The Lord our Maker, who giveth songs in the night," Job xxxv. We read of Master Robert Glover, mentioned by Master Fox in the Book of Martyrs, that though he were a man very gracious and holy, faithfully bearing witness to the truth; yet it pleased God to withdraw himself and presence from him, insomuch that he was greatly distressed while he was in prison: and opening himself to his friend, told him how God had left him and deserted him. His friend exhorted him still for to wait on God, which he laboured to do; and the night before his execution, spent much of that time in prayer. Yet no comfort came, no manifestations of the presence of Christ. The next day he was drawn out to the stake for to die for the truth, and as he went, he mourned much for the presence of Christ; but when he came in the sight of the stake, it pleased God so to fill his heart and soul with comfort and the incomes of his love, that he cried out unto his friend, Oh, Austin, he is come, he is come, he is come! This good man was in the dark a great while, but when in the darkest time, then Christ came. Christ comes at midnight, when he doth come with comfort.

And, when Christ comes with outward delivering mercy to a person or people, then he doth come at midnight also. It is said of Israel, that they went out of Egypt at midnight.

God had promised deliverance a long time before, and they did all expect it; but who would have expected it at such a time as that was? And if ye look into that last chapter of Zechariah, we shall find that the great deliverance of the churches, promised, is to be "in one day, which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night, but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light," ver. 7. Who would expect light at evening? All expect darkness at evening time. But at evening, when we look most for darkness, God hath promised this great light.

And for Christ coming at the last, ye know what he says, "I will come in an hour when ye look not for me." And for this great deliverance and victory which the Lord hath now given unto you, was it not at midnight? Consider with yourselves a little, remember the days of your former troubles, and were you ever in a more dark condition; were ye not all benighted; when were your enemies more high and lofty; when were your friends more down and dejected? A night, a night, the Lord knows, a dark night was come upon us. Well, but now Christ comes with a seasonable, almost miraculous victory and deliverance. And this is Christ's way and manner; he never comes to his people as a Bridegroom, but still he doth come at midnight; in all his comings, still he doth come at midnight.

Christ loves that his people should sit up for him, watch and wait for him. He waiteth to shew mercy on them that wait on his mercy. The more a man is respected and beloved in a house, the more, if he be abroad, those in the house will sit up and watch for him: he that loves him not, says, I will go to bed, I will stay no longer, let him come when he pleases; but he that loves him saith, I will watch, I will stay, I will sit up for him, yea, though he do not come until midnight.

And does it argue love, for one man to sit up and wait for another; and not love in our souls, to sit up and watch, and wait for Christ? Christ loves to see our love exercised; and therefore, says he, Though I intend to save and help such a person, yet I will stay, and stay long, I will not help him presently, I will suffer a night, a dark night to come upon him; so shall I see his love in waiting for me.

Christ loves to shew mercy to his people in such a way,

as he may hide pride from men; he would not have his people to be proud of mercies. And upon this account, says the text, in Job xxxiii. "He seals on instruction in the night, that he may hide pride from man." When a man is awake, he tries things by reason, and if reason like them, then they do pass for current; if reason do not approve them, then they will be rejected: but in a dream, in a deep sleep, the mind receives things, not examining them by reason. Now in the great things of God, the less hand reason hath, and the more faith, the better. Reason's going before faith doth diminish it; but reason's following faith, strengthens it: say the schools.* Faith ennobles a work. The more a man ushers in a business with his own reason, the more apt to be proud thereon; but in a dream, in a deep sleep, there is little of reason to be used; and therefore in a deep sleep he comes upon us, that he may hide pride from us.

Christ loves to come so as he may be most welcome to his people; and the less expected, the mere welcome many times: and when is he less expected than at midnight? If a man be in extremity of misery, and a friend comes to visit him, then he doth not only bid him welcome, but admires his love: Oh, sir, could you find in your heart to come to me now; what, now at midnight? this is love indeed. Christ comes to be admired of all that believe, says the Scripture; and therefore, when his people are in the dark, in a dark night, then he chooses to come, and then especially, and then a man's heart doth melt with love to Christ: Oh, what a gracious Saviour have I, that could find in his heart to find me out with his mercy in this dark condition, in this unexpected time. His time is not as our time, as his thoughts are not as ours. Christ is the good Samaritan, he will pour wine and oil into the bleeding wounds of his servants; but he will first let the priest pass by, and the levite pass by, and such means and helps pass by which we ordinarily expect comfort from; and when we have none from them, then says he, Now is a time for me: but by that time all other helps are passed by, it will be midnight. But though it be midnight, says Christ, it is all one to me, for I create light, and my thoughts and my times are not as man's are. And though man come with help and succour in the day time, yet

* Rationes precedentes minuunt fidem, subsequentes augent.

I will come at midnight. Oh, what glorious dispensations of love and mercy is here!

What is the issue of this doctrine; what if Christ do come at midnight?

This doctrine looks wishly upon two sorts of people, such as he doth come against, and such as he doth come for.

Some foolish virgins there are whom Christ comes against, and these he will come upon at midnight, take them in their beds, when they are fast asleep in their sin, and are most secure. Ye have heard of the lamentation of Norwich: there was a generation of men that rose up and threatened to destroy the godly party there; but the Lord so ordered things in his providence, that those whom they threatened to destroy, were preserved, and the destroyers perished; nigh two or three hundred, if relations be right, blown up with powder, or spoiled, and three godly families, consisting of about twenty persons, in several rooms of the house that was blown up, were all preserved, and not a bone of them broken, whilst the others flew up into the air, as spectacles of divine anger, as if God should speak from heaven, These are the people whom I would have preserved, and those are the people that I would have punished. But oh, poor destroyed souls who perished in the thunder of God's anger, did they ever think that Christ would have come upon them at such a midnight? Here is a great deliverance and victory that is now before ye: if relations speak true, two thousand and five hundred, putting to flight eight thousand of the enemy, fifteen hundred slain, three thousand taken prisoners, and the rest scattered: but, oh, poor deceived people who made this insurrection, did they ever think that Christ would have come so suddenly, in such a time, at midnight upon them? Consider all your wars, and hath not Christ come at midnight all along? Christ is in the way to his kingdom, and every step he takes shall be midnight; both unto those he comes for, and those that he comes against; but woe to them whom he doth come against, it is a dreadful thing to be cut off suddenly, and surprised in our sins. This is a judgment threatened on the latter day, Christ will come quickly, be quick with men in a way of judgment: as a thief in the night will come, when poor foolish virgins shall be fast asleep.

I would here therefore exhort and beseech ye in the Lord, to consider the ground ye stand upon, the principles ye work by, the cause ye manage; and I appeal to you, whether do ye not think that God is in all these wars, that the event of battles is only in the hand of God? Some of you, no friends to parliament, nor the cause of God in their hands, have tried many ways, as once Balaam, to curse Israel; sometimes ye have got upon one hill, and there ye have built an altar, thinking from thence to curse God's people; when that would not do, then you got upon a second; when ye could not do it from thence, then ye got to a third mountain: one while ye thought to have done it by the strength of your old skilful soldiery; when that would not do, then ye came home, and sought to make divisions among us, and to raise jealousies between brethren; seeing that would not do it sufficiently, you have now gotten to a third mountain, labouring to stir up the countries to make insurrection, and yet ye cannot curse them from these. Wherefore now after all, do ye not think that God is against you; can ye believe that God is with you, after all these successive victories that have fallen against you? Have ye not read that scripture, "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth, the wicked are snared in the works of their own hands?" and have ye not been snared in the works of your own hands; have ye not risen to fall; have not your own doings been your undoing; and will ye yet go on to plot, consult, design; what, will ye never have done? Well then, go on, consult, plot, devise, associate, confederate together, try the conclusion, work to the utmost; yet know that when ye have done all, and as ye think have the better, and all is your own, then will Christ come upon you at midnight, in an hour and time when ye do least expect him, and it will be a darker night than ever yet you saw; for our Lord and Saviour Christ, he doth come as at the last, so now in these his precedaneous comings, still at midnight, he doth come at midnight. Be wise now therefore, oh, ye princes, nobles, rulers, judges, gentlemen, and others: kiss the Son, lest ye perish in the way, for Christ is upon his way unto his kingdom.

Again, this doctrine looks wishly upon such as Christ comes for. Why should any of God's people despair or be discouraged, saying, Christ is now gone, and will never come

come again; he hath hid himself, and I shall never see his face again. Nay, but he does come at midnight, that is his time, a time wherein he is least expected, a dark time, the darkest time, the sleepiest time, the coldest time, a time when all your candles are out, and your comforts out, when you cannot see your hand, your working hand, your praying hand, when you say all is gone and lost, and I shall never see the light again, comfort again; then doth Christ say, This is my time, it is now dark, and night, and midnight with my servant, now will I go and comfort and deliver him: why should any godly man be discouraged, whatever his condition be; shall Christ come at midnight, and shall I be discouraged because I am in the dark? Oh, my soul, remember this, Christ comes at midnight, in all his comings, still he doth come at midnight. And that this is Christ's constant course with all his people, see what is said in Hosea vi. 3, "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord, his going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Oh, but I am a poor ignorant creature, do not know or understand the mind and will of God in these actions, and transactions of things abroad. Be it so, yet, says the Lord, you shall know him, if ye follow on to know him. Oh, but I am in a sad and a dark condition, benighted with some affliction. Be it so, Christ will come, and he will come as the morning; as sure and certain as the morning comes, so will Christ come; and though it be a dark night, yet ye say, certainly morning will come again; so confident may you be of Christ's coming; for, saith the text, he will come as the morning: that is, certainly. Oh, but I shall faint in the meanwhile, he will stay long ere he comes. Nay, but he will come in season, as the former, and as the latter rain; the former and the latter rain come in their seasons; so will Christ do, and therewithal your comforts shall be all revived and refreshed; why should then any of God's people be discouraged?

But suppose that the Lord Jesus do comfortably appear to us in a dark condition, when we look not for him, as now he hath done to this kingdom: what is our duty that doth flow from hence?

If Jesus Christ hath appeared to you in the dark, and

come to you even at midnight; then trust in the Lord for ever; and again I say, trust in the Lord, trust in the Lord at all times. Here is one night over, but another night will come, I fear, and it may prove a darker night; night and day have their courses. But does Christ come at midnight; why then should we not trust in God at midnight, in the darkest time?* "At what time I am afraid," says the Psalmist, "I will trust in the Lord." Faith moves Christ for to come the sooner: and therefore, says the apostle, "Looking for, and hastening the coming of the Lord." You read it in the English, hastening unto; but according to the Greek,† the words may be read better thus, looking for, and hastening the coming of the Lord. Our very looking for his coming doth hasten his coming. Faith mitigates our calamities, and holds the hands of our enemies. I have read in the life of Tyndale, that he being in the Low Countries, heard of a certain juggling conjuror, that could by his conjuring, command a dish of meat from any prince's table in the world, which he did use to do, and would ordinarily invite his friends unto dinner: whereupon Master Tyndale resolved, that he world go see this act, but would set himself to believe the contrary; which he did; and the company being come together, and the conjuror endeavouring the same, was so hindered by the faith of Master Tyndale, that he cried out, and said, I cannot do it, there sits the man that hinders me, and holds my hands.‡ I say, faith will hold the hands of wicked and devilish men; such too many we have to deal with in these times: oh, that you would use your faith more and more. And have ye not ground enough for it: Christ comes at midnight; why should you not believe whatever your condition be, although it be never so dark?

Again, If Christ come at midnight, then why should those who are employed for Christ, be shaken, or unsettled in his work and service?

We many times leave God's work, and are not constant in it because of opposition, which doth make us fear: but will Christ come and own us, and come in a time when we look not for him, in the darkest time; then why should not men

* Nec super biendum rebus florentibus nec desperandum adversis.

† Προδοκωντας και σπευδοντας την παρουσιαν, 2 Peter iii. 12.

‡ Fide armatus, difficilia queque potest.

go on with all constancy, even in their darkest fears? Luther relates a story of Austin's mother, which also Austin doth mention, who was much troubled for her son Austin, because for the space of seven or nine years, he had been a Manichee, she prayed and continued praying for him; at the last, in a night, she had as a word from God in answer to her prayer these words, *Qualis tu, talis ille;* As thou so he. Whereupon she was much refreshed, and told him, she had received a promise from the Lord that he should be converted from his error; but he told her the meaning of the words was contrary, that she should be as he was, that is, converted to his opinion; but she did so constantly abide in her sense, that, *Facile transivit in sententiam matris,* he easily turned to his mother's opinion. And indeed, what more convincing to an adversary than to see one constantly abiding by what is good. A christian, especially a christian magistrate, should be like to Christ, who, when he is in a way of mercy, will not be put out of his way by men. Isaiah xxvii. 4., "Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together." At verses 2, 3, he speaks of his great love and care to and of his church: "A vineyard of red vine, I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Aye, but in this vineyard, there may be many briars and thorns, that may arise up to afflict God's people. True, but says the Lord, Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them. As if he should say, Indeed these wicked men are as briars and thorns, rending and tearing my poor people, and as briars and thorns they do conjoin and twist together; but though they do rise up against me in the way of my mercy towards my people, yet they shall not put me out of my way; I will even pass through them: yea and though they do rise, it shall be to their own ruin; they shall burn together; I would burn them together, I the Lord would pass through them. Now our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I hope, is in the way of mercy to this poor kingdom; but certainly, he is upon the way to his own kingdom; and though wicked men may obstruct and hinder us, they shall never hinder him, but he will pass through them. Oh, therefore, labour more and more to be like to Christ, keep on your way; for

though it be late ere he come, yet he will certainly come, he comes at midnight.

Again, If Jesus Christ have come unto us, even at midnight: why should not all of us go forth to meet him with some present of thankfulness? The more abundant, full, free, and continued any mercy is, the more it doth call for thankfulness, Christ hath been in the field for you and fought your battles for these many years; and I must needs say, that of late our divisions and sins have been so great, that I feared they would even drive Christ out of the field: but now I see still he doth own your cause, and own your forces, still he doth keep the field; yea, and goes on marching, as if he were resolved not to leave the field, till he hath conquered all this kingdom with his love; and he hath now given you a taste of his intentions and love in this victory, a seasonable victory, a wonderful victory, an unexpected victory, a midnight victory; oh, thou wonder-working God, shall we not now praise thy name? We read of a great strait and dark condition that Jehoshaphat was in by reason of his enemies; but he crying unto the Lord, the Lord heard and delivered him and his people: insomuch as they kept a day of thanksgiving in the open fields, and they called the name of the place Berachah, the valley of blessing. 2 Chron. xx. 26.

In Joshua's time the people of Israel were in a great strait by reason of the Amalekites, who came upon them when they were weak; but the Lord fought for his people, smote their enemies, and they were quite destroyed; whereupon Israel made an altar, and called it, Jehovah-nissi, the Lord my shield. In Samuel's time, again, they were in a great distress by reason of their enemies; but they cried to the Lord, and he delivered them, and destroyed all their enemies: then they set up a stone, and called it, Ebenezer, the stone of help, saying, "Hitherunto the Lord hath holpen us." Afterwards, again, they were brought very low, into a very dark estate, sold into the hands of their enemies; but the Lord raised them up saviours, Deborah and Barak, and delivered them from all their enemies: and then they penned a psalm of praise, the vth of Judges, wherein they do ascribe and give the glory of all unto God himself; wherein they make an honourable mention of the instruments which God used; they did not revile the instruments but honoured them;

wherein they condemned and cursed those that would not go forth to help the Lord, "Curse ye Meroz;" wherein they commended the tribes and countries who came forth and willingly offered themselves unto the service of the Lord; wherein they prayed against the enemies of the church: and then mark the issue, at the last verse, "And the land had rest forty years." And such an issue, not only forty years, but many times forty years rest may you have, as an issue of the praises of this day.

But yet, observe, still some monument of praise was erected; sometimes a stone, sometimes an altar, always one monument or other of praise. And have we no altar; no stone now; no name of God to celebrate now; no present of thankfulness to bring to our God this day? Is there no act of mercy to be shewn; none of Christ's friends to be relieved? Shall we make no progress; shall we stand still; do nothing, as men in amaze? Shall we make no improvement of this deliverance and victory? Why should we not all sit down under our relations, and say, How shall I make improvement of this mercy; what shall I do now for God and Christ that I did not before; is there nothing in your hand; what, no present to be given to Christ; have we nothing at all? then let us bring the sense of our own nothing; for the more humble ye are after victories, the more thankful for victories. And if ye have no present in your hand this day to bring unto God for this victory, yet bring the victory itself and give it to God. Ye give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: why? because his image is upon them; and hath not this victory much of the image of God upon it? When David was delivered from his enemies, we read, in Psalm cxvi., that he checks himself for his former unbelief, "I said in my haste," &c., and gathers up himself into God again; "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." When delivered from his enemies, as we read in Psa. cxviii., he found a retreat from man. O my soul, trust not in princes, not in man, nor in the sons of men; trust not in princes. The word in the Hebrew is, ingenuous men, for princes should be ingenuous; and if any men are to be trusted to, they are ingenuous men; but being delivered from men, he retreats from men, and says, O my soul, trust not in men, nor in the sons of men, not in princes, not in ingenuous men.

Yes, and in that Psalm he call upon others also for to praise the Lord, and so let us do in his words: "Oh, give thanks

unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever: he stilleth the rage of the sea and the tumults of the people, for his mercy endures for ever." Who hath owned your cause again, and your forces again, for his mercy endures for ever; who hath remembered you in your low condition, for his mercy endures for ever; and hath visited us with his love at midnight, for his mercy endures for ever. "Oh, give thanks unto the God of gods, for his mercy endures for ever. Praise the Lord."

If Christ come at midnight, then methinks his personal coming is not far off. I cannot say it is midnight in that respect, but surely it is very late; it is very dark, and it hath been dark a great while.

We read of two sorts of signs which go before the coming of Jesus Christ; some that are more remote and transient, some that are more immediate and just at his coming. Those that are more immediate and just at his coming, ye read of in Matt. xxiv. 29, 30: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." These are yet to come. But those that are more remote, all seem to be past already. Before the coming of Christ, says the apostle, the man of sin shall be revealed: that is past. Before the coming of Christ there shall false prophets arise, and say, I am Christ; and another, I am Christ: that is past. Before the personal coming of Christ there shall be wars and rumours of wars: this is past. And before that day there shall be great divisions, even in the matter of religion; one saying, Lo, here is Christ; and another, Lo, there is Christ: this is already. And immediately before, and at his coming, men shall be smiting their fellow servants, eating and drinking with the drunken: this is already. The wise and the foolish virgins shall be all asleep: and was there ever a time when both wise and foolish were more asleep than now? When men set themselves to sleep, they draw their curtains, put out their lights, and will have no more light come in; so now, when men are asleep, their senses are bound up that

were open before; they see not, hear not, taste not, smell not; their senses are locked up. Sleep is, *legatio sensuum.* And was there ever a time when men's senses were more bound up, that were formerly exercised, than now? Are there not some that would pray and hear and read, that will not now; who have now thrown off all duties, ordinances and means? Oh, what sleeping is here; was there ever such sleeping among professors as now there is? If ever wise and foolish virgins were asleep, they seem to be in our days; and shall we sleep also; will ye not rather watch and pray? Watch and pray, pray and watch; and what I say to one I say to all, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

Take but two or three wakening observations from this parable.

1. If ye look into this parable, ye may observe a most desperate sleep is come upon all professors, immediately before the coming, the great coming of Christ. I call that desperate sleep which is universal; this parable falls upon the churches; "Then shall the kingdom of heaven (not the kingdom of the world) be like to ten virgins;" and those ten shall be all asleep, good and bad. And says our Saviour in another place, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, shall he find faith on earth?" Again, I call that a desperate sleep which shall be in the face of light. It is a hard thing to sleep whilst a candle is held unto one's eyes; and in the time before Christ comes, much light and truth shall break out, as antichristian error goes off; and yet, even then, good and bad shall fall asleep.

I call that desperate, again, which shall be in the midst of trouble. It is a hard thing for a man to sleep when he is pinched and stricken: in the times before Christ, and when he comes, men shall be smiting their fellow servants, and yet even the smitten shall be asleep. Oh, what desperate sleeping times shall the latter times be; have we not all cause, then, for to watch and pray?

2. If ye look into this scripture or parable, ye find that those who fall asleep immediately before the coming of Christ, shall never wake again till Christ come. "And they all slept (says the text of the ten virgins) and waked not till the Bridegroom came."

Now if a man be very sleepy, and you come to him, and

say, Sir, take heed of sleeping, for if you do fall asleep, you will never wake again, will he not take heed of sleeping? thus it shall be with the sleepers of this latter time. At other times, men shall sleep and wake, and wake and sleep; but if men fall asleep, into a spiritual sleep, immediately before the coming of Jesus Christ, they shall sleep till he comes, and shall be waked no more but by his coming. O Lord, who would not watch and pray lest he enter into temptation!

3. If ye observe this parable, ye shall find that there are two sorts of sleepers, and accordingly two events of their sleeping.

Some slept, as the wise virgins, but did keep their oil, their oil not spent; these when the Bridegroom came, entered with him into his joy.

Others there are that sleep, and have spent their oil, had oil but spent it; and these when the Bridegroom cometh are shut out; and though they call, Lord, open; he answers, "I know ye not." So now in the latter days, there shall be two sorts of professors, one that shall sleep and slumber, but they shall keep their graces, their oil, their principles; and these, though they be found asleep when Christ comes, Christ will pardon, and their sleeping, because they have still their oil.

Others there shall be, who shall not only fall asleep, but they shall lose their principles. True, I thought, indeed, that a man was bound for to keep the Sabbath, to live strictly, and to make a conscience of every word and thought, but now I see there is more liberty: thus they shall lose their principles, their oil, their judgments. These poor souls shall never wake again; and when Christ comes, though they cry to him for mercy, they will not obtain it. No, ye have lost your principles, your oil, your judgment; ye are foolish virgins, ye shall never enter into my joy, he will then say. Who would not, then, watch and pray? What I say to you, I speak unto my own soul, and to every person here present, Oh, let us all watch, for the Son of Man comes, and he comes at midnight; and if it be not midnight now, yet it is late already.

And seeing all these things are so, give me leave, honourable and beloved, to leave an exhortation with you, which is no other than that which the psalmist presents unto ye in the xxivth Psalm: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come

in." Gates, ye know, are the place where the magistrate sat. The temple door was called the everlasting door, in opposition to the door of the tabernacle, which was to continue but a little time. The psalmist speaks here of Christ's kingdom and lordship on earth: verse 1, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Then he will have a church and precious people: "Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord; who shall stand on his holy place?" verse 3; which he answers in the general: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart:" and more particularly at verse 6: "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, even Jacob."

The children of Israel had two names: sometimes they were called Israel, when they were in a more flourishing and strong condition; sometimes they were in a low and weak condition, and then they were called Jacob: "Fear not, O worm Jacob." Now says the psalmist here, The earth is the Lord's, and Christ shall reign, and the poor despised Israel shall be converted, and ascend unto the hill of God. Now, therefore, my advice and counsel unto you is, that as the Lord Jesus shall make any approach unto your towns, cities, kingdoms, churches, you would receive him, and not shut your gates and doors against him; but, oh, all ye cities, towns and magistrates, lift up your heads; lift up your heads, O ye gates, and all you temple-men and churches, lift up your everlasting doors, that this King of glory may come in. And if ye ask who it is? "It is the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle;" wherefore lift up your heads. And because this exhortation is of great consequence, and men are slow to receive, I exhort you to it again, at verse 9: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Now the Lord grant that we may also lift up our heads and gates, that this King of glory may come in among us, not as a judge to condemn us, but as our bridegroom to love us.

EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE.

IN TWO SERMONS.

PREACHED AT CLAPHAM AND AT MARGARET'S NEW FISH STREET. A. D. 1645-6.

EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE.

SERMON I.

"*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"—MATT. III. 2.
Or thus,
"*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven hath approached.*"

THESE words are the words of John the Baptist, when he first began to preach the gospel of Christ; and if you look into the next chapter, Matt. iv. 17, ye shall find that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself does preach the same doctrine in the same words, "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our Saviour Christ, the better preacher, is not ashamed to tread in John's steps and words: John honoured Christ, and Christ honoured John. Ministers should strengthen the hands one of another. And if ye look into Matt. x., ye shall find, that when our Saviour sent out his disciples for to preach the gospel, he commands them to preach the same doctrine too, in the same words, ver. 7, "Go ye, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But, here is no Repent? Yes, that was in their commission too, as ye may read in Mark vi. 12; they would not preach a word beyond their commission: "And they went out, and preached that men should repent." So that their commission also was to preach thus, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven hath approached," or hath drawn near unto you. Surely there is somewhat more than ordinary in these words, that John and our Saviour Christ and all the disciples, should begin thus, for to preach in these words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." They were all ministers of the gospel, and the ministers of the gospel are not barely to preach repentance, but they are to preach repentance upon gospel motives: "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

In the words ye have an exhortation, "Repent ye;" a motive unto the work of repentance, "for the kingdom of heaven hath approached."

"Repent ye;" that is, be not only sorrowful for sin committed, but mend your lives. Repentance is sometimes taken in a large sense for amendment of life. Sometimes repentance is taken only for godly sorrow, in a more strict and a narrow sense.

Sometimes it is taken largely, for the amendment of our life; not only for godly sorrow, but all obedience and reformation. And so it may be taken here, as ye may perceive by ver. 3, where this word Repent, is explained: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand: for this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Preparing the way of the Lord, and making straight paths, all one with repentance. There is a legal repentance, and there is an evangelical repentance. Some think it is a legal repentance that is here required: and thereupon they urge a necessity of legal preparation before a man does come to Christ: as there is John Baptist before Christ, so, say they, there must be a legal work of necessity before a poor soul can have any admittance to Jesus Christ.

But I pray consider the words, and you will find, that not a legal repentance, but evangelical, is here required. Did our Saviour Christ himself preach legal repentance? They are the words of our Saviour Christ, he uses them too.

The repentance is, as the consideration is, that this work is to be founded on, as the motive is. What is the motive? The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent; let your repentance be upon this ground, because the kingdom of heaven hath approached, because the kingdom of heaven hath drawn near. He does not say, Repent, because the kingdom of hell is near; but, because the kingdom of heaven is near: the motive being evangelical, the repentance is so; it is not a legal, but an evangelical repentance that is here required. Besides, these words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," are not spoken only to the ungodly, but unto the godly also of those times, who were to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make straight their paths. And, therefore, not to be understood of a repentance only preparatory to that in the heart.

But what then are we to understand here by the kingdom of heaven; and the approaching of the kingdom of heaven?

For the kingdom of heaven hath approached or drawn near unto you.

The kingdom of heaven sometimes, in the language of the New Testament, notes, the glorious condition of the other world that we are going to. Sometimes it notes the state of the church; it is used for the church of Christ; and sometimes for the gospel of Christ. I take it here for the whole state of the Messiah: the kingdom of grace, Christ, and all his benefits, grace, mercy and free remission published in the gospel, in the several dispensations and administrations thereof. This is called the kingdom of heaven; for this motive, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, is set and used here in opposition unto the motives that were used among the Jews. When the Jews were excited and put upon any duty, they were stirred up thereunto upon such motives as these: for the kingdom of Canaan is at hand; if you do so and so, God will bring you into the land of Canaan, and give you that land. Now under the gospel here are other motives, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Not like those Jewish motives: the kingdom of Canaan is at hand, or the kingdom of the Jebusites is at hand. Christians are not only or especially to be stirred up by such motives as these, but by higher and greater motives, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; and may carry an Hebraism with it; the kingdom of heaven, that is, a heavenly kingdom; as the law is called, the law of fire, in the Hebrew, a fiery law. The Jews expected the Messiah, and dreamed of an outward, glorious, and pompous kingdom: now, says John the Baptist, the Messiah is come, his kingdom is come; but it is not an outward, glorious, and pompous kingdom, but it is an heavenly kingdom, and therefore, repent, and prepare yourselves for the receiving of it, make your way plain, for the kingdom of heaven, an heavenly kingdom, is now at hand.

"Is at hand," we read it; but according to the original rather thus, "The kingdom of heaven hath approached;" *appropinquavit.* As if he should say thus: Do you turn to God, because God hath turned to you; do you draw near to God, because the kingdom of grace and free remission hath drawn near to you.

There are two notes that lie here before us, that I shall commend unto your consideration.

The first is this, That the kingdom of heaven, of grace, mercy, and of free remission, does approach unto us before we do come unto it.

And secondly, that the appropinquation, or drawing near of the kingdom of heaven is the highest, and greatest argument and motive in the world unto true repentance.

The kingdom of heaven, I say, the kingdom of grace, mercy, and free remission of sin, does approach to us, before we draw near to it; repent, turn ye, for the kingdom of heaven hath approached, or it hath come near to you, and therefore do you come to it.

Thus it lies in the words: and thus you will find it all along.

Thus God hath promised; thus Christ hath parabled; thus God fulfilled.

Thus God hath promised. Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee: what voice is that, but the voice of mercy, and the voice of grace, and of free remission?

"Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee:" when thou art going away from God, and when thou hast thy back upon God, thou shalt hear a voice of mercy behind thee; it shall follow after thee before thou dost come to it.

And thus you have a clear parable for it, which you may read, fully speaking this truth in Luke xiv. 16—18, and so on, "A certain man made a great supper, and bad many; and sent his servant at supper time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuses: so that the servant came (verse 21) and shewed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." Mark, here are invitations of mercy sent out to those that never thought of it. "And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, (verse 23) Go out into the highways, and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." See I pray, how the kingdom of grace, and mercy, and free-remission is brought near unto a people, before ever they did make after it.

And this, I say, you shall find fulfilled. So God hath

dealt by the world. So by particular kingdoms and nations in the world. So by particular towns and countries in a kingdom. So by particular families in a town. And so by particular persons in a family.

Thus God hath dealt with the world, he hath brought near the kingdom of grace, and mercy, and free-remission to the world, before ever the world did make after it. When the whole world had sinned in the fall, and lay in wickedness, and never thought of returning unto God; "God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son to them," John iii. 16. When Adam did not think of Christ, nor the world in him; the Lord gives out a promise, "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15. Thus mercy, and grace made its approach towards the world, before ever the world did seek after it.

So in regard of a nation, in regard of a kingdom in the world: "Go (says our Lord and Saviour Christ unto his disciples) and teach all nations." The nations did not come to Christ and say, Lord, the Jews have refused the gospel, and therefore we beseech thee that the gospel may be preached unto us, and we will receive it: no, but before ever they sent any such message to have the gospel come down to them, the gospel is sent to them, "Go (says our Saviour) go preach to all nations." But Lord they might say, Suppose that in those nations we meet with such a man as Herod, such a man as Pilate; shall we preach the gospel and free remissions of sins then to such a one? Go, says Christ, I make no exceptions; go, and preach to all nations. But suppose that a Judas come in when we are preaching the gospel. Says Christ, I make no exceptions, if a Judas will come and submit, go preach to all, go preach the gospel, go preach to all nations.

And was it not thus with the nation of the Jews, as ye read in Ezek. xvi., when they were first taken into God's love? "None eye pitied thee (verse 5.) to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion on thee." Verse 6., "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live: yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." And so it will be with this people, the Jews, again, when they shall be converted in the latter days of the world: the Lord speaks

so concerning them by the prophet Isaiah: "I was found of those that sought me not," Isa. lxv. 1. And in Isa. lxvi. 7., it is said concerning the Jews that are yet to be called, and the preventing love of God towards them: "Before she travailed, she brought forth: before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child."

Thus it is also with particular towns in a kingdom or in a nation: the kingdom of grace, of heaven is brought near to them before they do seek it. The apostles went and preached unto several towns; Iconium, and Derbe, and Lystra, before those towns did call for the gospel. And if you look into Matt. iv., you find that our Saviour Christ came and dwelt in Capernaum, verse 13., "which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people which sat in darkness, saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." While they were sitting still in their sins, and in the very shadow of death, Christ goes among them, and causes a glorious light to shine upon them: they did not go out to the light, but the light did come out to them first.

So it is also in regard of a particular family in a town. It is said concerning the jailor's family, that they were all baptized, they all believed; but how, did the jailor's family come and seek after the kingdom of heaven before the kingdom of heaven was brought unto them? No; the apostles were brought into prison, God works a miracle, the kingdom of heaven, grace, and free remission, is brought to the prison, and is brought to the jailor's family, before ever the jailor did stir after it.

And so ye know it was with the family of Zaccheus. "Zaccheus, (says our Saviour,) this day is salvation come to thine house." Pray consider it a little: did Zaccheus' house go to seek for salvation; or rather did not salvation come and seek for Zaccheus' house? Indeed Zaccheus out of a curiosity ran and got up into a tree that he might see the outside of Jesus Christ; but our Lord and Saviour Christ calls him down, "Zaccheus, (says he,) I must dine with thee:" invites himself, he carries salvation unto his family.

Thus God deals by families: he deals thus by the world, he deals thus by nations, he deals thus by towns, he deals thus by families.

And he deals thus by particular persons also. Was it not thus with Matthew the publican? He sat, ye know, in his custom-house, and Christ came and found him out there; he did not first go and seek after Christ, but Christ came first unto him, and found him out in his trade, and said unto him, "Follow me." And was it not thus with Paul? Says Paul, "I was a blasphemer and a persecutor, but I obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 13. I was breathing out threatenings against the saints, and against the disciples of Jesus Christ: but as I was breathing out threatenings against them, the Holy Ghost breathed upon my heart, and met me in the way, and unhorsed me, and shewed me mercy. The kingdom of heaven did approach unto Paul, before ever Paul sought after it.

And as it is with a particular person in regard of his first conversion and first repentance, so in regard of his after repentance. Peter sins, and before ever Peter repents, Christ looks back upon him; that is the first, then Peter wept bitterly. Jonah sinned and sinned greatly in running away from God; before ever Jonah could find in his heart for to seek unto God, God works a miracle, provides a chamber of preservation even in the belly of destruction, in the whale's belly, for him. God brought near his pardoning mercy and grace to him, before ever Jonah came near to it.

And as it is in regard of a man's first, second, and after repentance, so it is also in regard of a man's comfort and consolation. "O Lord," says David, "make me to receive joy and comfort, that the bones that thou hast broken may rejoice," Ps. li. 8. "My soul refuseth comfort," says he, Ps. lxxvii. 2. As if he should say thus: Lord, I have been a great surgeon at other men's hearts, and I have been able to set their bones that have been out of joint, but now mine own bones are broken; I have fallen greatly, and now my own bones are broken; I cannot set my own bones; my soul refuseth comfort, and the promise is to my heart like a bank of ice, that my heart slips off: and Lord, if thou dost not uphold my heart with a promise, I shall never have comfort; make me to see comfort, O Lord.

Thus you see, wherever you look in the Scripture, it is full

of the truth that is here before us, namely, that the kingdom of heaven, grace, mercy, and free remission, does approach unto us before we draw near to it.

Evidences of it:

One is taken from our own condition. Naturally we are lost sheep: so we are called by Christ. Man, in his natural state, is compared unto the lost son, the lost groat, and the lost sheep. Now you know when a sheep is lost, it does not lie where it is lost: if you lose your purse, or if you lose a ring, it will lie where it is lost, unless it be taken up: but now, if a sheep be lost, the sheep wanders up and down, and doth not lie where it was lost, but wanders up and down over one mountain to another, through one thicket to another, through one dirty place to another; and of all creatures, the lost sheep does not seek the way home again. A dog lost will seek the way home again; a cat and such like creatures lost, will seek the way home again: but a sheep lost, does not seek the way home again. Now we are all lost sheep, wandering up and down. One, he wanders over the mountain of pride; another through the thicket of the world; another through some unclean slough; but all wandering, and no man able to find his home, until he be first found. Therefore says our Saviour Christ, "I came to seek and to save those that are lost," Luke xix. 10. He does not say barely, I came to seek those that are lost; but, "I came to seek and to save those that are lost." And truly we must be sought all along. Says David in Ps. cxix. 176, "Lord, I have gone astray like a lost sheep, oh, seek thy servant." We have need of continual seeking, as long as there is continual wandering; we have need of such a Shepherd as may seek us out. But first of all the kingdom of heaven does seek us out, before we do seek it: when we are found, then we seek, but we never seek until we are first found.

Another evidence I take from Christ's willingness for to save sinners. There is an infinite willingness in our dear Saviour for to save poor sinners. He came from heaven for that end and purpose. If a man come a thousand miles upon a business, will ye not think he is willing to do it? Jesus Christ came from heaven for this business, for to save sinners; is he not then willing to do it? I may say that Jesus Christ is more willing to save sinners, than sinners are to be saved

by him! The prodigal goes home to his father, but when the father sees him afar off, he runs; the prodigal goes, and the father runs to meet him with mercy.

Yea, and our Saviour Christ seems to be most willing to save the greatest sinners; the greatest saints have been made up out of the greatest sinners. When the Lord Jesus Christ was upon the earth, did he not carry his grace and mercy, and the doctrine of free remission, to the greatest sinners? Beloved, consider of it, I pray you. The greater the sinner is, the more is Christ honoured in getting out his pardon, and in satisfying for such a sinner; and so he will love Christ the more. Look I pray into Luke vii. "Simon, (says Christ) I will propound thee a parable. Master, say on," says he. Then says our Saviour, at ver. 14, "There was a certain creditor that had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty: and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love the most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged." Those that he forgives most unto, will love most. Jesus Christ loves to be greatly honoured and loved, and therefore he is willing to save the greatest sinners. But now, the greatest sinners are most opposite unto what is good, they do not seek after what is good: surely therefore, if Jesus Christ would save sinners, and the greatest sinners, of necessity the kingdom of heaven and of grace must approach unto us, before we draw near to it.

But you will say, the Scripture seems to be contrary unto this doctrine; for hath not the Scripture said, "Turn unto the Lord, and he will turn unto you," Zech. i. 3; "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you," James iv. 8. How is this therefore true, that the kingdom of grace, mercy, and free remission, does first draw near unto us, before we draw near unto it?

Yea, hath not our Saviour Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" Matt. ix. 13: that is, such as are sensible of their sins? surely, therefore, a man must be sensible of his sins, must be sensible first, before the kingdom of heaven, of grace, mercy, and free remission, be brought near unto him.

For answer, the Scripture is clearly with us; the apostle John speaks out expressly, "We loved him, because he loved us first," John iv. 19.

And says our Saviour, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," John xv. 16. I have chosen you, you have not chosen me.

And whereas it is said, that we should "turn to God, and he will turn to us;" and "draw near to God, and he will draw near to us:" that is, he will draw near unto you again, he will turn more unto you: not as if we should begin to turn to him, and first draw near to him, before he does first draw near to us at all; but, "draw near to him, and he will draw near to you;" and, "turn to him, and he will turn to you;" that is, he will draw more near to you, and he will turn unto you again.

And whereas it is said, that "Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance;" that is, such as are sensible of their sins; and men must be first sensible, before the offer of grace, mercy and free remission be made unto them.

I beseech you turn unto the place where the scripture lies, it is Matt. ix. 13, at the latter end of the verse: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." This, say I, is not to be understood of sinners only sensible of their own sins, but sinners indeed; Christ came to call sinners indeed, yea, before they are sensible of their sins. For the word sinner, here, must be understood as the word, sinner, before is, in verses 10, 11: "As Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him, and with his disciples. When the pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" He did eat with those that were not sensible of their sins. Sinners, there, are not to be meant of those only that were sensible of their sins; Christ did not only eat with those that were sensible of their sins. Now he gives this account of it, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance;" that is, sinners, such as he names before, such as he did eat withal; and they were not only such as were sensible of their sins.

Again, Our Saviour Christ gives this account, at verse 12: "The whole need not the physician, but those that are sick;"

to answer to this objection, that our Saviour did eat with sinners and converse with sinners, says he, I am a physician; and physicians are to go to those that are sick only. There is this difference between me, a physician, and other physicians, for I come unsent for, but other physicians come when sent for; I, as a physician, come to call my patients, but other physicians are called in by their patients. Now, says he, I am a physician, and I come not to call the righteous but sinners; I come to call my patients. Physicians do not only go to those that are sensible of their disease, but if a man be past sense, his friends send for the physician, and the physician goes. So does Christ here, comes unto his patients when they are not sensible of their disease many times.

Again, This suits with that which goes before. "Go," says he, at verse 13, "and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Sometimes this phrase, this sentence is to be understood concerning bodily mercy, but here it is to be understood of mercy to the soul: "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Ye object to me, that I converse with publicans and sinners, not with those that are righteous in their generation; go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: I have more delight in conversing with poor sinners than with those Jews that do offer sacrifice.

And again, consider, what sense would there be if this should be the meaning: "I came not to call the righteous but sinners;" that is, I came to call those that are sensible of their sins. Then the meaning must be this, I came not to call the righteous, but men that are penitent, men that are sensible of their sins and are penitent. If by the calling the sinners, we are to understand those that are sensible only, then the sense must be this, I came not to call the righteous but men that are penitent. No, no, Christ came to call sinners, poor sinners; although they were never yet sensible of their sins, the Lord Jesus Christ came to call sinners, which are so indeed.

This doctrine then stands, notwithstanding that objection.

But, you will say, the prodigal seems to come home unto his father, before his father does come to him; and to repent, before his father shews mercy to him: and so our repentance

does prevent the Lord's mercy, and not the Lord's mercy prevent our repentance.

For answer, It is good for us always to attend unto the scope of the scripture, in parables especially. The scope of the parable cannot be according to the tenure of this objection, for then it should be contrary to the former parable, of the lost sheep.

Indeed, the prodigal says, he will repent, before he goes to his father: "I will return to my father, and I will say, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and I am not worthy to be called thy son," Luke xv. 18, 19; but he never says so till he came to his father; after his father had fallen upon his neck, and forgiven him, and shewed mercy to him, then he said so, and not before. "And (says the text) when his father saw him afar off:" notwithstanding he was resolved to go home, yet he was far off from mercy: his father saw him afar off, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, preventing of him by his grace; this makes it more prevalent.

But yet, you will say, How can this be? can God love sinners; can God set his love upon poor sinners, that are so?

What says the apostle, in Rom. iv. 5, "He justifies the ungodly," not in their sins, but from their sins, through Christ. It is not in God's love, as in our love: you love because the thing loved is lovely, but God's love does make lovely; your love finds lovely, and God's love makes lovely; you love a person because of some beauty, but God's love does make beautiful; you love a person because of some good you do find before you love, but God's love brings the goodness with it, God's love makes the person good that he does love. His love is the original and root of all our obedience and sanctification. Though the root lies under ground, all the branches are beholden to it, and the fruit have their sap and life from it; so though God's reconciling love lies under ground, and ye see it not, yet it is the root of all your obedience, of all your sanctification. Ye may observe, therefore, that in the Epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians, to the Hebrews, when the apostle would stir up the Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, to holiness of life, that he lays his exhortation upon the doctrines of free grace, love, justification by faith alone, and the fulness of Christ's satisfaction for poor unworthy sin-

ners. In the book of the Romans he begins to state the doctrine of free justification of sinners and remission by Christ alone. In the book of the Galatians he begins with free remission of sins and justification by faith alone. So in the book of the Hebrews. But the end and conclusion of all these epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, is, obedience, repentance, and holiness of life; as if this were the great root that all our obedience did grow upon, even free remission of sins and justification by faith alone. And if justification do go before our sanctification, then of necessity there must be an approaching of the kingdom of heaven to us before we do come to it.

Give me leave to give you two or three reasons of it, and so I will come to the application.

God doth so order things in the dispensations of his grace and administrations thereof, as that he may be known to be God, Jehovah, that all flesh may see his glory. What is the glory of God? His free grace is his glory. And therefore ye shall observe, that when Moses begs to see God's glory, "Lord (says he), shew me thy glory," Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19; the Lord made him this answer: Moses, wouldest thou see my glory; what, otherwise than thou hast seen it in the mount? Moses, here is my glory, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." The Lord read him a lecture of his free grace. Moses, here is my glory, my free grace is my glory. And how can God's free grace be more seen and manifest than in such a way; causing the kingdom of heaven, of grace and free remission to draw near to us, even before we do stir towards it?

God does so order things in the dispensations of his grace, as that men may be made the most gracious. The sight of God's grace will make a man gracious: the more ye see the grace of God in Christ, the more gracious ye will be. And pray mark that instance which ye have in Luke vii., the same that I named before, consider it well, at verse 37, "Behold, a woman in the city which was a sinner," it seems she was a very wicked woman, a sinner, "when she knew that Jesus Christ sat at meat in the pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed

them with the ointment," What is the reason of this? Says our Saviour Christ, verse 47, "I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she loved much." She wept much because she loved much, and she loved much, because much was forgiven her.

The papists and those that do follow them say indeed, that her forgiveness was a fruit of her love; because it is said here, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much." But, good people, mark it, and you will find, that first of all there is forgiveness, and thereupon the woman loved: and her loving much, was but a sign of her being much forgiven. For this is suitable with the latter end of verse 47, "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much." Much forgiveness is the ground of loving much: and loving much is a sign of much forgiveness: for it follows, "But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

And this suits also with the parable that ye have before, at verses 41, 42, 43, which is brought in upon occasion of this woman's loving thus much. "A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty: and when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." Mark the scope of the parable, and you will find it is to show, that love flows from forgiveness. The papists, and others that cleave to them, therefore, go against the scope of this parable.

And now my beloved, if all our love be upon forgiveness, and forgiveness goes first; oh, what free grace is here? we repent, and we weep because we love; and we love because we are forgiven: but forgiveness goes first: oh, what grace, and love is here. Paul was so taken with this, that to me he seems to be more taken with it, than with the vision that he had in the third heaven, says he, "I knew a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, a man (says he,) wrapt up into the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful to be uttered," 2 Cor. xii. 2. And this Paul speaks of but once. But, says Paul, "I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor; but I obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 13: this story he tells three times: he tells the other

story but one time; but this story, this story of free grace; how he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and how he obtained mercy; this was never out of his mind. As if he were more refreshed with the thought of this, than with the other. And I pray what then? Do but observe Paul, how gracious he is: how humble he is: how thankful he is: how ready to serve Christ: how ready to serve the churches for Christ: how ready to suffer for Christ upon all occasions: oh, how gracious did this make him. Thus it is with a poor soul, that hath tasted of the free grace of God in Christ; the heart is more taken herewithal, than with the thoughts of heaven: ah, says a poor soul, I was going on in such a sinful way; or, I lay sleeping and snorting in my sins; and I know not how, before ever I was aware, the kingdom of heaven did approach unto me, and the Lord in his free grace showed mercy to my family, and to my poor soul. Oh, therefore any thing for Jesus Christ; oh, I will spend, and be spent, oh, any thing for Jesus Christ. The sight of God's grace, doth make one gracious; and therefore Christ does take this way, causing the kingdom of heaven, grace, and free remission, to approach unto us, before we do draw near to it.

There is one reason more, I will but name it.

Christ does so order things in the dispensations of his grace, that no flesh might glory in itself, or in any thing that it hath, or doth: that no flesh might rest in any duty, in any service, in any suffering; but only upon grace, upon Christ alone. Beloved, we are very unwilling to come unto any duty; and when we have done, we are then as apt to rest upon it, as ever we were unwilling to come unto it. But what is the reason that men are so apt to rest upon their duties, but because there are these secret thoughts, that they come to Christ, before he does came to them. Let the heart be possessed with this truth, That Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of heaven, and of free grace, does approach unto us, and come near to us, before we draw near to it; and then he will not rest so much upon what he is, or doth, or suffereth. A man in this case is like unto a silk-worm; you know how it is with that worm: it makes a fine web, a fine work, and when it hath done, it dies in it; afterward it eats a hole through the work, and it comes out with wings, a quite other creature

than it went into it. So it is with a poor christian: he makes a fine work of duty, and then he dies in it; but through the manifestations of God's free grace, he does, as it were, eat a hole through all, and he comes out with wings flying away from his duties, not so as to neglect the performance of them, but so as not to rest upon them: flies away from, in regard of resting upon any duty; and only upon this ground, because, says he, God did draw near to me, grace did draw near to me, mercy did draw near to me, before ever I drew near to it: and therefore why should I rest upon any duty? perform it I will, but through grace I will not rest upon it.

By way of application: let us I pray consider with ourselves, whether God hath dealt thus by our souls or no; hath the kingdom of heaven approached, and drawn near unto us, before we drew near to it? If not, truly, for aught that I know, we are yet under the law: and all our mournings, and walkings heaven-ward, they are but legal: if God love you indeed, he shews kindness and mercy to you, before you do come to him.

It is with God's darlings, as it is with the world's darlings. You have some men take a great deal of pains, rise early, and go to bed late, and yet the world does not smile upon them: these are the world's enemies. Some take pains, and grow rich thereby; these are the world's friends. Others there are again; that before ever they take any pains the Lord is upon them with the world's blessings; these are the world's darlings. So I say, God hath his darlings; and if thou art one of God's darlings, he does cause the kingdom of heaven, grace, and free remission to appear and draw near unto thy soul, even before thou dost draw near to it. Hath God dealt thus by any of you? Oh, contemplate, consider seriously the sweetness of this grace. Beloved, preventing grace is sweet grace. The Lord gave a crown, a kingdom to David; but the best pearl in all the crown, that his eye was most upon, was God's preventing mercy: "Lord," says he, "thou hast prevented me with the goodness of thy blessing." Ps. xxi. 3. As if he had said thus: Lord, thou hast not only given me a kingdom, made me a king over thy people; but when I was a poor shepherd, keeping my father's sheep; thou didst prevent me with thy love. So may a poor soul

say, Ah, Lord, thou hast not only given me a kingdom, but thou hast prevented me with thy love. It is a great matter that the great God of heaven and earth should answer our prayers, give us any mercy upon our request: aye, but that the Lord should give us the greatest mercy before we come to it! Pray, good people, mark it a little; ye shall observe, that the greatest mercies that ye have, ye have them, and they are given unto you, before you come for them. There are some great mercies that a christian hath: as conversion of his soul, justification, remission of sin; some lesser mercies: as comfort, and peace, and outward plenty. As for these lesser mercies, God gives them when we do come for them; but as for the great mercies: remission of sin, justification of our persons, conversion of our souls, God is upon us with these mercies before we come for them: oh, what grace is here; oh, what glorious, rich grace is here! What, shall we not stand and admire at the glory of this free grace of God in Jesus Christ!

You will say unto me: But suppose this, that the Lord hath brought the kingdom of heaven near to me, and my family, before I did come to it: for I must confess, that I have tasted, and drunk deeply of God's preventing love: oh, how graciously hath God dealt by our poor family! we were a poor, ignorant family; and the Lord shewed mercy to our family when we little thought of it: to such a child, to such a servant, to such a friend, to mine own soul. Indeed this is true, that the kingdom of heaven hath approached unto me, drawn near unto me, before I drew near to it; oh, what is my duty now that does flow from hence?

Let me tell you:

First of all; be sooner at heaven-gates with your duties hereafter, than ever you were before. When as a master comes into his servant's chamber in the morning, and takes him abed: if the servant have any ingenuousness, the servant says, This my master's coming thus early, is plainly a rebuke to my sloth; and therefore, God willing, I will be up sooner another day. So now, when as the Lord doth thus prevent us with his grace, and is at our bed-side with his grace, when we lie sleeping, and never think of mercy and grace; an ingenuous soul should say thus: What is all this but a plain rebuke to the slothfulness of my duty? Come, up

prayer, up duty, oh my soul be up sooner: yea, through the Lord's grace I will be up sooner at heaven-gate in duty, than ever I was before: his preventing grace teaches me thus much, that I am not soon enough at heaven-gate with my duty.

Again, hath the Lord prevented any of you with grace, and caused the kingdom of heaven to draw near to you before you draw near to it? Do you do the like: labour in your love to be like unto Christ, to be like to God. We stand upon our terms when we have to deal with men, upon our terms of state. Had Jesus Christ stood upon his terms of state when he came to save sinners, what had become of us? We say, we will forgive such a man for wrong done to us, upon his acknowledgment: oh, but did Christ do so? Did not Christ prevent us? Beloved, ye see how it is with the water, it moves downward; but if the fire get into it; if there be water in a pot upon the fire, and fire get into the water, the fire makes it move upward, it moves according to the nature of the fire then. So now, if the love of Jesus Christ get into our hearts, it will make us move like unto Christ: how does the love of Jesus Christ move? Oh, says Christ, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do," Luke xxxiii. 34. Christ did not stay for acknowledgment: a poor, and a low thing for a christian; enough for a heathen to say so: I will forgive such a man for wrong done to me upon his acknowledgment. Let our love be like unto Christ's, and labour to prevent others with our love, as Jesus Christ hath prevented us.

Again, Then let all men wait upon others, with all long-suffering, and patience, for their conversion, and the revelation of truth unto them. Thou art a parent, and desirest thy child may be converted, and hast taken a great deal of pains with him for his conversion, and yet it will not be. Thou art a governor of a family, and wouldest fain have such a servant converted to Christ, and hast taken a great deal of pains, and yet it will not be. A friend you have, and you would fain that he knew such a truth, and much pains you have taken to beat such a truth into him, and he does not take it, and you are ready to be angry: but remember this, the kingdom of heaven draws near to us before we draw near to it: grace must come to thy child's soul first before it does

come to Christ, mercy must come to the soul, and the Lord must come and bring truths unto the soul. What is then to be done? Then be not angry with him; wait with all long-suffering, and all patience, and go to God; go to God for thy child; go to God for thy friend; go to God for thy servant, upon this ground, because the kingdom of heaven must come to us first, before we can come to it.

But especially, Trust in the Lord for ever. Oh, all you that are the servants of the Lord, upon this ground, trust in the Lord for ever. Does the kingdom of heaven approach, and draw near to us, before we draw near unto it? Then say within your souls, Doubting shall be no more.

Some there are, that doubt of their salvation, because of the ignorance that is in them: darkness causes fear: they do not know the merciful disposition of Jesus Christ, and so they doubt of his love. The devil, as he labours to change himself into an angel of light; so he labours to change Christ into an angel of darkness. But beloved, ye have heard of the merciful, sweet disposition of Jesus Christ: he is willing to save sinners, and the greatest sinners; brings near the kingdom of heaven to us, before we draw near to it: oh, wilt thou doubt again; poor christian, wilt thou doubt again?

Some there are, that doubt of their salvation, because they are afraid their duties shall not be accepted, prayers shall not be accepted: Oh, if I could but be persuaded, says one, that the Lord would hear my prayer, and accept of my duty, then I should know indeed I should be saved: but I am afraid the Lord doth not hear my prayers, and accept of my duties; and therefore I fear I shall not be saved. Man or woman, wherever thou standest, or art, hear the word of the Lord. Does the Lord cause the kingdom of heaven to approach and draw near to us, before we draw near to it; will the Lord be found of those that seek him not; and will he not be found of you that do seek him? Will the Lord come with his grace, and make an offer of grace and mercy to a sinner, and a great sinner; and will not the Lord receive you, when you do come unto him? Think of this: and surely then you will say, Doubting shall be no more.

Some there are that doubt of their salvation, because they

cannot pray; their hearts are dead; pray I cannot, and hear I cannot, and read I cannot; perform duty I cannot; and therefore I have cause to fear that I shall never come to heaven. Well, but though you cannot, man, or woman, christian, pray as thou art able, and hear as thou art able, and read as thou art able: the Lord Christ is of this sweet disposition, that he does cause the kingdom of heaven to draw near to us, before we draw near to it: oh, therefore, you that are the servants of the Lord, trust in the Lord for ever; for ever trust in the Lord: and let doubting be no more.

I conclude all with one word of exhortation, and it is unto those that have not yet submitted unto this kingdom of heaven, this kingdom of grace: is there a truth in this doctrine: That the kingdom of heaven, grace, mercy, and free remission, does approach unto us, before we draw near unto it; and that because, indeed, we are not able to draw near to it, before it draws near unto us? Then all you, that have not yet submitted unto this kingdom of grace, and the offer of grace and mercy in the gospel; whenever any offer shall be made unto you, take heed that ye neglect not so great salvation. You see how it is with the seaman: because the seaman is not able to raise a wind, or turn the wind when it is raised, he lies upon the sea coast ready, waiting upon the wind; and when the wind turn, then he hoists up his sails, for, says he, now the wind is come about, and if I lose this gale, I am likely to lose my voyage: I cannot turn the wind, I cannot make the wind. So I say to you, man or woman, young man or old: hath the Lord brought a gale upon thine heart at any time; a gale of mercy, made a tender of mercy, and free remission to thee? Oh, for the love of God, and of thy own soul, take heed how you lose this opportunity; is the wind come about? The Spirit bloweth where it listeth. Is the wind come about? Up with thy sails, up with thy sails, take heed how you lose this opportunity that now you have. Little do you think, that the kingdom of heaven may be in such a motion as you despise: the kingdom of heaven may be knocking at your door, the door of your heart, by such a hand as you little think of. "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds; but it grows to that bigness, that the fowls of the air come and make there their

nests," Matt. xiii. 31, 32: when you see a little mustard seed, you will say, it is impossible; can ever this mustard seed grow to that bigness, that the fowls of the air should there make their nests? The kingdom of heaven is like Christ himself? Can this be the Messiah? it is the carpenter's son; can this carpenter's son be the Messiah? So the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed: comes with a small motion: may be the child makes a motion to his father, Oh, father, let there be prayer in our family, oh, let there be reading the word of God in our family. May be the servant comes and makes a motion to the mistress; Oh, mistress, let us go to such a sermon, let us go to such a meeting, let us go to prayer: the kingdom of heaven may come in such a motion; by the hand of a child, by the hand of a servant: take heed therefore if you have not submitted to this offer; oh, take heed, take heed how you neglect so great salvation. I say the kingdom of heaven may come in such a small motion as you despise. And therefore, if ever the Lord breathe upon any of your hearts; if the wind come about; man and woman, up with thy sails, now for thy life, now for thy eternity; if this gale be lost, may be thou shalt never have such a gale again: the kingdom of heaven does approach and draw near unto us, before we draw near unto it: well therefore, when it comes, see that you accept of it.

SERMON II.

"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand:" (or hath approached.)—MATT. III. 2.

THESE words are part of that sermon which John the Baptist preached, when he first began for to preach the gospel. They contain, ye see at the first view, an exhortation to repentance, with a motive, or encouragement thereunto: "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

I take it for granted, that ye understand what is the notion of repentance. And my design is not to fall into the common place of repentance; but only to speak to it so far as it hath relation to this motive.

Some there are, that think these words are to be understood of a legal repentance; as if John the Baptist's ministry were a legal ministry: and in that sense he himself a forerunner of Jesus Christ. This, methinks, is to lower the ministry of John the Baptist. And if you look into Luke i., you will find, that John's ministry was not a legal ministry, but a gospel ministry: verses 76, 77, "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways: to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins." And if ye look into the following verse to the text, ye shall find the interpretation of this repentance: "Repent ye: for this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." So that preparing the way of the Lord, and making his paths straight, is all one with that which is going before. Now is any one able to make his paths straight, before he do come to Christ; why then do we come to Christ if we be able to make our paths straight, before we do come unto him?

And besides, As the motive is, such is the repentance that is founded on it. The motive here is evangelical: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The motive is evangelical, surely therefore the repentance here required, is not a legal, but an evangelical repentance.

But what is it then? what is here meant by the kingdom of heaven; and the kingdom of heaven being at hand, or approaching?

In the language of the New Testament, the kingdom of heaven is sometimes put for the kingdom of glory; sometimes it is put for the church of Christ under the New Testament: sometimes it is put for the gospel, and the preaching of the gospel: sometimes for the whole kingdom of grace. I take it here for the whole state of the Messiah: the kingdom of grace, the preaching of the gospel, and the dispensations thereof. And he says here, That the kingdom of heaven hath approached: therefore do you turn, therefore do ye repent.

There are these two notes that lie before ye.

First, The kingdom of heaven does approach unto us, before we do come unto it. Repent ye: or turn ye: because

the kingdom of heaven hath approached unto you; so in the beginning.

Secondly, That the appropinquation, approaching, or drawing near of the kingdom of heaven, is the highest and the greatest motive in the world unto true repentance.

I have spoken to the former, in a congregation not far distant: and my desire is to speak unto the second.

The appropinquation, approaching, or drawing near of the kingdom of heaven, is the highest and the greatest motive in the world unto true repentance.

This is the motive that John uses here; thus John begins, when he began for to preach the gospel. And if you look into chap. iv., ye shall find, that our Saviour Christ begins to preach repentance upon the same motive: verse 17, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The same words. And if ye look into Matt. x., ye shall find, that when he sent out his apostles for to preach, he put the like words into their mouths also: verse 7, "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

There the word, repent, is not, you will say: but if you look into Mark vi. 12, ye shall find that it is said there, "Then they went out and preached that men should repent." It was part of their commission: and thus they were to preach repentance upon this motive, "That the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or the kingdom of heaven is approaching." Surely therefore, this is the great motive, the motive of motives. In the invitation to the great supper spoken of in the gospel, what is the motive used, for to bring men unto the supper, but this? "Come, for all things are now ready;" mercy is ready, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is ready, come, for all things are now ready; this is the motive that is used there. And if ye look into Rom. xii. 1, ye shall find that when the apostle doth exhort them to present themselves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, he persuades by this motive of mercy: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." I beseech ye therefore. That therefore, sends us unto the former chapter, to inquire what these mercies were. At verse 30, of the former chapter, he says unto them, "For as ye in times past have not believed

God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief." The Jews were cast off: and the gentiles, these Romans, received to mercy, the kingdom of heaven did come to them, the gospel effectually preached to them, the doctrine of free remission of poor sinners: now, says he, I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice. The Scripture is full of this.

But for our better opening, and clearing of this truth: let us, I pray, descend into the particulars of repentance, and consider how the grace, and mercy, and love of God in Christ, which is the substance of this kingdom of heaven, hath an influence upon them all; and how all of them are caused thereby.

A man that does repent, must see and know his sins: true sight of sin is requisite to true repentance. Indeed, a man may in some measure attain unto the knowledge, and discovery of his sin by some affliction: when Adonibezek had his fingers and toes cut off, you know what he said: "Thus have I done." Afflictions do unleave a man, take off his leaves: when the leaves are off the hedges, ye see those birds-nests that ye could not see before when the leaves were on; and so when affliction hath made one naked, and taken one's leaves off, a man is able to see those nests of corruption in his own heart that he never did see before.

The apostle says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin:" but now, though by the law, as by a rule, we come to the knowledge of our sin; and by affliction we are helped to see the nests of our own hearts: yet notwithstanding, a man cannot see his sins fully but by gospel light; it is a work of the Spirit to convince of sin: "I will send the Spirit, the Comforter, and he shall convince the world of sin." And where does the Spirit breathe, but in the gospel, the kingdom of heaven, the preaching of the gospel? "Received ye the Spirit, (says the apostle) by works of the law, or by the preaching of faith?" When once Isaiah the prophet had had a sight of Christ out, he cries out, *Væ mihi*, "I am undone; woe is me, I am undone, I am unclean."

Again, for I will but touch upon these; as a man must know his sin, so if he will repent truly, he must be grieved and humbled for it. If you look into Luke vii., ye may see what work it had. A woman, a great sinner, comes to Christ,

and she washes his feet with her tears; what made her do so? She loved much, for much was forgiven her. So that the more the love and mercy of God in Christ is opened in the gospel, or does make its approach unto a soul, the more the soul is set a weeping and mourning for sin committed.

Again, As a man repenting must be grieved for sin committed, so he must and he will loathe himself; self-loathing is requisite to repentance. If a man have taken a surfeit by eating or drinking, he does not only loathe the meat which caused the surfeit, but he loathes the very vessel that hath the smell of the meat or the liquor in it. So now when a man comes to repent, he does not only loathe his sin, but he loathes himself, the vessel where the sin was. Oh, these filthy eyes of mine; oh, these vile hands; oh, this vile heart of mine: he loathes himself. But what causes this self-loathing? The prophet Ezekiel will tell ye, in chap. xx. 41, 42, 43: "Then shall ye loathe yourselves when I am pacified;" or when God had shewn them mercy, caused his love to approach unto them. Then should they loathe themselves. It is not all your afflictions, nor all my threatenings, says God, that will make ye to loathe yourselves; but when ye see my love, my grace, my pardoning mercy, then shall ye loathe yourselves: not your sins only, but yourselves also.

Again, A repenting person does not only loathe himself for his sin, but he is ashamed of it; he is ashamed of his former evil ways. "What fruit have ye of those things whereof ye are *now* ashamed?" not before, but whereof ye are *now* ashamed. So long as a man walks in the dark, he does not blush, he is not ashamed, though his clothes be ragged and torn, and his naked flesh appears, because he is in the dark; but if he comes to the light, then he blushes that his nakedness appears. And so long as men are in their sins and are in darkness, they are not ashamed of their sins, because they are in darkness; but when once they come to the light, then they blush, and then they are ashamed. What light is that, that will ashame one of sin? There is light enough in hell-fire, for the damned there to read their sins by, but that does not make them ashamed; where the light of the gospel, the opening of the kingdom of heaven is, and pardoning love is, there is shame. Ye shall see, therefore, how Ezra blushes when he considered the love of God and their sins together;

in chap. ix. 6, "And he said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face unto thee, my God." Why? "For our iniquities are increased." Is that all? No; says he at ver. 8, "For a little space grace hath been shewed us from the Lord our God, to give us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place: we were bond men, yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage: and now, O our God, what shall we say after this?" After this? The sight of their own sins, and the remembrance of God's love together, made him blush. Ye know the place in Ezekiel, "Then shall ye be confounded and ashamed, when I am pacified towards ye." The more a man knows that God is pacified towards him, the more he is ashamed.

Again, A repenting person is not only ashamed of his former evil ways, but as occasion serves, he will acknowledge his sins. But I pray, what worsts the heart over to this acknowledgment? When David had Saul at a great advantage, and spared him, Saul breaks forth into this expression, "O my son David, thou art more righteous than I." O David, thou art a righteous man, but I am an unrighteous man. So when the soul sees what infinite advantage the Lord hath it at, and how the Lord spareth, then the soul breaks forth and says, The Lord is righteous, I am unrighteous, I am unrighteous: this works an acknowledgment.

A repenting person, does not only acknowledge his sin as occasion serves, but he labours to un-sin his sin: and truly else it is no repentance. He does walk contrary unto himself and his former self; he does labour to undo what he had done before sinfully; he does labour to unsay what he had said before wickedly. Before the jailor was converted, he clapped up the apostle into close prison, and either whipped him there, or else being whipped, he did not relieve him and wash his wounds. But the jailor repenting, mark how he walks contrary to himself; repenting, he opens the prison-door, he washes the apostle's wounds, brings him into his own house, sets meat before him. Those sorcerers, Acts xix., repenting, burnt their books, which before they prized, and studied much. How did Manasses walk contrary to himself, when he once repented.

Well, but what is that, that will bring the soul to this disposition, to walk contrary to one's former self? If you look

into Psalm cxvi., ye shall find there how the psalmist eats up his former words: "I said in my haste, all men are liars." It was amiss in me, I eat my words, I am sorry for it. What made him do it? Says he, at ver. 3, "The sorrows of death compassed me about, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow: then called I upon the name of the Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver me." At ver. 5, "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." Now having had a taste of God's grace and God's mercy, now he eats his former words. And so the good man Hezekiah: "I said (says he) I am cut off from the land of the living." He did eat his words: "I repent, it was suddenly done," Isa. xxxviii. 11. How was he wrought off to this? He had tasted of the love, and grace, and goodness of God, and this made him do it. So that now, look into the bowels of repentance, and the several workings thereof, and ye shall find there is no such way or means or motive to bring a soul unto repentance, as the approaching of the kingdom of heaven, the word and work of God's grace, and love of God in Jesus Christ.

Would you know the reason? Briefly thus:

Repentance is a fruit of faith. Ye have a notable expression of godly sorrow to the height, in Zech. xii. 10, 11, 12, speaking of the call and conversion of the Jews: "They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him:" ver. 10, "as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Bitterness upon bitterness, and mourning. "And in that day (ver. 11) there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon: and the land shall mourn, every family apart, the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart." Here is great mourning and sorrow. What caused this? Says he, at ver. 10, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." They shall look upon me whom they have pierced. This is the eye of faith, and all true mourning and sorrow does come from thence. All tears of repentance flow from the eye of faith. The more a man by faith is able to see a pierced Christ, the more his heart is pierced for sin committed. The more by faith a man is able to see a wounded Christ, the more will his heart be wounded for sin committed. Faith

works repentance, but what worketh faith? Surely the gospel, the preaching of the gospel. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the preaching of faith?" He does not say by the preaching of the gospel, but by the preaching of faith: the gospel is called faith, not only because it is the object of faith, but that by which faith is wrought.

Again, As repentance is a fruit of faith, so also it does flow from love. *Amor doloris causa.* Love is the cause of grief. The more a man loves another, or apprehends that he is loved of him, the more he grieves if he hath any way injured him. If you at unawares do strike another, and one tell you that he is your enemy, ye grieve not, ye are not troubled, unless it be in regard of some mischief that may come to yourself; but if one tell you that he is a friend, a special friend, that grieves you. So now, if by my sins I have stricken at God, if I look upon God as an enemy, I am not grieved much, I am not troubled much; but when I consider him as my Father, the best friend I have in the world, and consider how by my sins I have stricken at him, this makes me grieve. Oh, that ever I should wound the name of him whom my soul loves! She loved much, says our Saviour concerning the weeping woman, she loved much, for much was forgiven her. He does not say, she wept much, for much was forgiven her: there was no mention before of her love, but only of her weeping; and yet says our Saviour, she loved much: because he would shew what it was that drew up the sluice of these tears; it was her love. And what causeth love? Love causeth love. The more a man sees and apprehends the love of Christ towards him, the more his heart is drawn out in love towards Christ again. And what greater act of love than this: that the kingdom of heaven approaches, that the kingdom of heaven should come, and make its approach to such a poor sinner as I am? Surely, therefore, the approaching or drawing near of the kingdom of heaven, is the highest and greatest motive in the world unto true repentance.

You will say, Experience seems for to speak the contrary: for, arguments drawn from hell, and the wrath of God, seem to be more powerful and efficacious in the working of repentance. I have, will some say, sometimes considered the wrath of God, and let out my heart upon arguments drawn from thence; and then I have been much humbled, broken;

been much affected; yea, the truth is, I have been more humbled, and more broken, and more affected, and more troubled for sin, than when the gospel, the word of the kingdom hath been preached and opened unto me: how therefore is this true? Experience seems to speak the contrary.

I answer, *Quicquid recipiter &c.* Every thing is received according unto the receiver. A legal spirit doth relish and savour most of those arguments which are drawn from hell, and from the wrath of God: but an evangelical christian, those that are drawn from love and mercy. But for the more full answer to this, pray consider with me, these six or seven distinctions.

It is one thing for a man to be troubled in conscience, and another thing to be humbled for sin committed. Those that are damned in hell, and lie there despairing, must needs be troubled in conscience; how could they despair else? Take a soul that hath the work of the law upon him, and a mere work of the law, and in some respects, he may be more troubled in conscience, but a christian that hath a work of the gospel upon his heart, is, notwithstanding this, more humbled for sin committed.

Again, It is one thing for a man to be pricked in heart, and another for a man to repent. Ye shall find therefore, that in Acts ii., it is said concerning divers, that they were pricked in their heart, and said, "What shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent." They were pricked in their heart, and said, What shall we do? and he said, Repent. Possibly then, a man or woman may be pricked in the heart, and yet not repent. Those that have the work of the law upon them, may have more legal prickings: but those that have the work of the gospel, they repent more.

Again, It is one thing for a man to repent of sin, considered *in genere entis*; and another thing, *in genere moris*. Sin may be considered in regard of the mischief, and inconvenience that does come thereby; or in regard of the moral evil of it. It is said concerning Judas, that when he saw what became of things, he repented. And a malefactor, a murderer, when he sees what shall become of him, that he must die for his sin; he may repent of his sin, *in genere entis;* wishing that he had never done it: and yet may be

not repent, *in genere moris*. Ye read concerning Esau in Heb. xii., "That he sought his birth-right with tears;" but found no room for his repentance. He repented, he repented with tears, but found no room for his repentance. What repentance was that? Says Austin, He grieved that he had lost his birth-right; not that he had sold his birth-right. So there was no room for such a repentance. And so now, take a man that hath the work of the law upon his soul, and he may be much troubled, he may repent; and he may have more repentings in regard of the evil that does come by sin: but the other more in regard of the evil that is in sin itself.

Again, It is one thing for a man to be broken with the weight of sin, and another thing to have his soul thawed, and melted for it. There is a great deal of difference you know, between the breaking of the ice with your hands, or with a staff; and the thawing of the ice, melting by the thaw. When you take a staff and break the ice with your hands, though you break it in one place, it freezes in another: but when there is a thaw, then it melts, then it breaks everywhere. So now it is in regard of legal breakings: here is a man hath a work of the law upon his soul, he breaks for his drunkenness, and breaks for his swearing, and he breaks for his wantonness: oh, but he freezes in unbelief, in another place; he freezes in unthankfulness: but when a gospel work comes, it makes a general thaw, a man is broken everywhere. And this is more.

Again, It is one thing for a man to have more sorrow, grief, repentance, in the ore; and another thing to have more sorrow, grief, repentance, that is well refined. As now, suppose a man take a handful of gold in the ore; it seems to be a great deal more than a twenty shilling piece; aye, but because much of that is to be taken away, a great deal of earth is to be taken away, it is less in the worth. Thus it is between legal repentance, and evangelical: the legal repentance may seem to be more in bulk: aye, but a great deal of that is to be taken away: much unbelief to be taken away; many sad, despairing conclusions to be taken away; a great deal of mercenariness to be taken away. And therefore ye shall observe, that when the father had kissed the prodigal, he left out the mercenary piece that he spoke of

before he came home. Says he at verse 11, "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants," Luke xv. 18—20. He rose and came to his father; his father saw him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him, had compassion on him: ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and the son said to him, "Father," now see whether he makes good his words, that he said he would say when he came to his father, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son:" but his father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe:" he leaves out that, Make me as one of thy hired servants. One kiss from his father had filed off all the mercenary disposition. Oh, much, much of the legal work is to be taken away: in evangelical repentance there is much in little; in legal repentance there is little in much.

Again, It is one thing for grief, sorrow, repentance to be more in view, sense, and noise; and another thing to be more in spirit, and in profit. As now for example, the rain does sometime fall in a storm, and when it does so, it makes a great noise; the earth hath not time for to take it at the first into its bosom; it runs down the streets in great abundance, and it stands in some places, in great plashes of water: at another time the rain falls by small drops, and makes no such noise: but yet notwithstanding, it falls to the root of the corn, and profits more; for when the rain falls so in a storm, it lays the corn; the corn, I say, is laid by it. So now, sorrow and grief sometimes fall in a storm, as in legal repentance; and it is great in view, stands in great plashes of water; oh, but then it doth lay our duties, it lays our assurance, it lays our faith: evangelical repentance, that makes no such noise, but it falls to the root of the graces, and does not lay your comforts, it does not lay your assurance, it does not lay your duties. And so it is more in profit.

Lastly, this sorrow, grief, and repentance may take one's own heart much, or the heart of God much; one's own heart may be much affected, or the heart of God may be much affected: beloved, we are apt to love our first born:

and though legal repentance does not always go before the work of the gospel: for what legal work was there in Matthew before he did come to Christ, or what legal work was there in Zaccheus before he came to Christ? yet oftentimes it does; I say, yet oftentimes it does; and this being the first-born of our soul, we go to God with both our repentances, legal and evangelical: and we say, Lord, lay the hand, oh, lay the right hand of thy blessing upon my first-born, oh, let that inherit: but the Lord deals here as old Jacob did, when Joseph brought his two children before him to be blessed; Jacob crossed his hands, and for Joseph's sake he laid the blessing upon the younger. So now does God do; you would have me to lay my blessing, says God, upon your first-born, upon your elder, upon your legal repentance. No, says God, I have said, the elder shall serve the younger, and I will cross my hands; and for Joseph's sake, because there is more of Christ in this younger, therefore here will I lay the hand of my blessing. Beloved, the heart of a christian, a gracious man, is never more drawn out in grief than upon the apprehension of love injured: the greater love, and the greater injury is presented, the greater is the grief. When the kingdom of heaven comes unto a poor soul, there is the greatest love presented; sin against that is the greatest injury: when therefore a man is sensible of his sin under that notion, then is his heart most affected and drawn forth in godly sorrow. Surely therefore, the approaching and the drawing near of the kingdom of heaven, is the greatest motive, and argument unto heaven unto true repentance.

By way of application: if these things be so, what a sad condition are those in, whom the kingdom of heaven, the word of the kingdom, the doctrine of free remission hath come unto, and yet they are not stirred, nor moved for to turn to God, or to repent? It may be, here is some drunkard, some swearer, some notorious sabbath-breaker, some wanton that is gotten into the congregation: I will not say to thee, Friend, how camest thou in hither? Ah, poor soul, thou mayest hear that voice, and those words too soon another day: but this I say, Friend, the greatest motive under heaven hath been used to move and turn thee; and yet thou art nothing moved and stirred therewith: oh, whereby shall thy

soul be brought unto repentance? "Go, (says our Saviour Christ unto his disciples) preach, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand: if they receive ye, your peace be upon them: if not, it shall be more easy for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for that city, than for that people, at that great day." Oh for the Lord's sake, take heed when ye hear the word of the kingdom, take heed that ye do not lose it: repent, and then turn to God.

But if these things be so, then here we see the reason, why our hearts are no more broken, are no more humbled, no more repentance, no more melting, heart no more softened: because ye do not labour to bring the kingdom of heaven near unto your souls: I mean the gospel, and the word of the gospel; free remission of poor sinners: when the kingdom of heaven comes near unto a person, he runs away from it, from the promise: oh, it belongs not to me; I am not so and so qualified; I am not so and so broken; I am not so and so weary, and heavy laden: and therefore the promise belongs not to me. But the approaching of the kingdom of heaven, is the only means and motive to break thy heart, and wilt not thou therefore come to it, because thy heart is not broken?

Oh, but the promise does not belong to me; the promise is made unto those that are weary and heavy laden and I am not so.

Mistake not, good people. The invitation is made to the weary and heavy-laden, but the promise is made to coming. There are two things in that speech, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden." Here is an invitation, and here is a promise. The invitation is made indeed to those that are weary and heavy-laden. Oh, but the promise is made to coming, the promise is made to coming.

But that is all one you will say, for then it seems I am not invited, if the invitation be made to such.

God does not speak every thing in every scripture; but, man or woman, art thou not invited by some other scripture? Pray what think ye of that in Prov. ix., "Wisdom hath built her an house;" that is, Christ, compared with the former chapter; "she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath furnished her table: she cries upon the high places of the city." What does she cry? read ver. 4, "Whoso

is simple, let him come in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding," ye read it; it is, "as for him that wanteth heart, come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." The invitation is made to simple ones: "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither."

Oh, but I have such an heart as never any had; I want a heart unto all that is good. Mark, "As for him that wanteth heart," she saith to him, "Come eat of my bread." How think ye, is the invitation here made only to those that are weary and heavy-laden? And if ye consider that place in the gospel, which ye know, the invitation to the great supper; the servants are sent forth to call in those that were bidden, and they excuse themselves: but they were bidden, they were invited: were they weary and heavy-laden, think ye? Well, he sent out again, and invites others. Look upon the text, were they weary and heavy-laden too? "Go, (says he) go, go to the highways, and go to the hedges, and compel them to come in;" were they weary and heavy-laden too? And if ye look into Rev. iii., ye find there that our Saviour says at ver. 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me." Our Saviour Christ here stands knocking, and offers the greetest mercies that can be; f llowship and communion with a poor soul: "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." What greater blessing or mercy can you desire than fellowship with Jesus Christ. Says Jesus Christ, "If any man will open, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." Here is mutual fellowship; Christ stands and offers this; he stands knocking. But, I pray, what door does he knock at; whose door does he knock at? Oh, my beloved, it is a Laodicean door. Laodiceans, what are those? Lukewarm: "I would thou wert hot or cold; but seeing thou art lukewarm, I will vomit thee out of my mouth." Lukewarm person, worse than profane; and yet, behold, Jesus Christ stands at a lukewarm person's door: knocking and tendering mercy to a lukewarm Laodicean person.

Aye, but stay, may be they were weary and heavy-laden, first, before they were invited.

Read verse 17: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest

not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." Were these weary and heavy-laden, think ye? and yet at this door, behold, at this door the Lord Christ stands knocking. Oh, grace, oh, glorious, rich grace. Oh, you that have stood at a distance from the promise, and dared not draw near to the promise; said it did not belong to you, you were not invited to mercy; consider, do you consider what great enemies you are unto your own breakings and humblings that ye do so much desire! The approaching of the kingdom of heaven, and the doctrine of grace and of free remission unto a poor sinner, is the greatest means and motive in the world to break one's heart. Oh, therefore, as ever you desire to have your hearts broken, and to be humbled, look much to the kingdom of heaven, and the doctrines thereof, and never say it does not belong unto you.

But if these things be so, if there be a truth in this doctrine, what infinite cause have we all for to repent, to mend our lives, and to turn to God? "The kingdom of heaven hath approached." Beloved, hath not the kingdom of heaven approached unto our nation? Take the kingdom of heaven for the kingdom of glory, and in these dying times, how hath the kingdom of heaven approached in that sense? Take the kingdom of heaven for the state of the church, and how many church truths hath broken out in these days that were not known before? Take the kingdom of heaven for the gospel and the preaching of the gospel, how hath God gone up and down in these latter times, even in these times of trouble, preaching free grace to poor England? Witness all these victories ye have had notwithstanding all your sins. O England, England, now repent and turn unto the Lord. Surely, if ever, the kingdom of heaven is come to you. Yea, hath not the kingdom of heaven approached unto many of your souls in particular? Are there not some here, great sinners, that have been invited to mercy; are there not some here, great sinners, that have received mercy? Hath the kingdom of heaven approached unto you, and will not you repent, and will not you turn to God, and will not you amend your lives?

You will say, This work is not now to do, we have repented already.

But pray give me leave, have ye, have ye repented upon gospel motives? have ye repented upon this ground, because

the kingdom of heaven hath approached? Oh, how many legal professors are there among professors! As there are two sorts of men in the world, some that live in dark places and prisons, and others that walk up and down in the light; so some there are among professors, some legal, that walk up and down in the dark, and see no light; others, again, that walk up and down in the light of the gospel: many, many legal professors.

Beloved, the more evangelical your repentance is, the more it will cure your souls, and not hurt your body. Legal repentance soaks into the body, and frets out the very strength of one's body. Pray look a little into Job xxxiii.; see what the Holy Ghost says there: "God speaks once, yea, twice, yet man perceives it not;" here is man in his natural, pure natural state: "In a dream (at verse 15), in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;" that is, before a man is aware: "then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." What then? "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain; so that his life abhorreth bread and his soul dainty meat: (verse 21) his flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out; his soul draweth near to the grave and his life to the destroyers." Here is legal work. Then comes the gospel. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom." Then, at verse 25, "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth." His flesh shall be fresher than a child's. Thus evangelical repentance is a friend both to soul and body. Mere legal repentance eats out the strengrh of one's spirit, even of one's very body.

Again, the more evangelical your repentance is, the more you will be humbled and grieved for sins against the gospel. "I will send (says Christ) the Comforter, and he shall convince the world of sin." What sin? Of sin and of unbelief. Oh, says the soul that repents evangelically, who more guilty of unbelief than I? Oh, never any one more ignorant of Christ than I! Oh, the unkindness of my soul towards

Christ! Legal repentance, it pitches upon some breach of the law, and there it rests.

Again, Evangelical repentance complies with spiritual joy, and is a friend unto it. You grieve for sin, and you rejoice in God; and when you rejoice in God you grieve for sin. I will send the Comforter, says our Saviour. He does not say, I will send the Spirit; no, but, I will send the Comforter, and he shall convince the world of sin and of unbelief. The Comforter, because it shall be a work of comfort unto the soul that is convinced of sin gospel-wise. And the more a man rejoices in Christ, the more he grieves for sin; and the more he grieves for sin, the more he rejoiceth in Christ again.

Again, When your repentance is evangelical, the more you apprehend or hope that your sin is pardoned, the more you will grieve for it. Ye read in the Psalms of one special penitential Psalm of David, the list. But when was that made? A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him; that is, after the prophet Nathan had been with him. And what did Nathan the prophet say to him? Says Nathan, Thy sin is forgiven thee. Upon that message David falls into a penitential Psalm, a Psalm of humiliation and of repentance. The more a man hath assurance that his sin is pardoned, the more he doth grieve for it.

And the more evangelical your repentance is, the more your heart will be enlarged to and for Christ. The sight of God's free love in Christ will make your heart free in love unto Christ and for Christ. When the poor sinner, the woman spoken of in Luke vii., had much forgiven her freely, she came and brought her precious boxes, and poured them out upon Jesus Christ. So when a soul hath tasted of the free love of God in Christ, then no boxes of ointment are too precious to pour out upon the feet of Jesus Christ.

Further, The more of the gospel and the more of the kingdom of heaven is in your repentance, the more of the gospel will be in your obedience, the more of the gospel will be in your assurance, the more of the gospel will be in your performance, in your prayers and other duties. Beloved, repentance is foundation work; it hath an influence upon all your service. If your repentance be legal, your obedience legal, and your performance legal, and your assurance legal; ever tying God unto such conditions as he never tied you to,

through the improvement of your own unbelief. But now, when as your repentance hath the gospel in it, drawn up and raised upon such motives as these; then your obedience, your comforts, your duties, your assurance will have the impression of the gospel also upon them.

And the more of the gospel, the kingdom of heaven, is in your repentance, the more your hearts and spirits will be meekened and sweetened towards the saints, towards your fellow servants, the people of God. What is the gospel but a dead Christ? As Jesus Christ was a living gospel, so the gospel is a dead Christ.

When the gospel approaches, when the kingdom of heaven draws near to a soul, and Christ therein, the heart is meekened and made like to Christ. The law is called a fiery law, the law of fire, compared unto Hagar; and says the apostle, The children of the bond-woman will persecute the children of the free-woman, of Sarah. And what is the reason that there is so much bitterness among professors, but because there is no more of the gospel and of the kingdom of heaven in our profession? Beloved in the Lord, ye see into what sad times of discord and bitterness we are now brought; as ever you do desire to be free from this spirit of bitterness, as ye do desire that ye may not have a hand in opposing your fellow servants, and acting a spirit of bitterness towards the children of God, oh, labour for more of the gospel, get more of it into your repentance and into your obedience; oh, let us labour to be more evangelical than ever we have been.

I had need call upon my own heart for this; and give leave to measure your own hearts by mine. Beloved, I do not now come to call for repentance, barely, but I come this night unto you, calling for refined repentance, gospel repentance: these are refining times; your public worship refined, the government refined; christians had need refine all their duties, and all their graces, and all their comforts, and all their assurance: we had need even take our whole garment, and look into every seam, brush every seam, there is so much dust gotten into it. Oh, labour, labour to be more evangelical, to get more of the gospel of Christ into all your duties. The gospel is the ministration of life; and the ministration of the law is called the ministration of death. The ministration of the gospel is called the ministration of righteousness; the

ministration of the law is called the ministration of condemnation. The gospel is called a glorious gospel, a glorious gospel: as ye do desire that glory may be upon you, get more of this glorious gospel into you; more of the gospel into all your duties, into your repentance; which that you may do, now even repent that ever you have been so legal in your repentance. A man will never be evangelical in his repentance that does not in some measure grieve that he hath been so legal in his repentance.

And, to end all, if at any time, man or woman, thou dost find thy heart dead and dull, and sayest, thou canst not pray, thou art unapt, and thy heart is hardened; then go, go to the word of the kingdom, go to the gospel, go, lay out thy soul before the word of the gospel; consider the kingdom of heaven, the word of the kingdom, free remission unto poor sinners; and this is the only way for to break your heart: for certainly this is a truth that I have spread before you; think of it: the appropinquation, approaching, or drawing near of the kingdom of heaven is the highest and greatest motive in the world unto true repentance.

END OF VOL. IV.

E. Palmer and Son, Printers, 12, Paternoster Row.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 023 548 1